

RECORDS AND
REMINISCENCES
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BURNAND

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RECORDS AND REMINISCENCES



MY PORTRAIT
PAINTED AND PRESENTED TO ME BY PROFESSOR VON HERKOMER, R.A.

RECORDS AND
REMINISCENCES
PERSONAL AND GENERAL

BY

SIR FRANCIS C. BURNAND

WITH A PORTRAIT BY HUBERT VON HERKOMER

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TO THE PUBLIC GENERALLY

“ I STAND corrected ”—in this Edition. And my thanks are due to the noteworthy assistance of Sir Harry Poland, K.C., J. C. Parkinson, Field Stanfield, A. W. Newton, H. Stuart (Secretary of the Oriental Club). Others also have interested themselves in various minor matters. I have not effected all the corrections I could wish, but hope to do so should there be a further demand for the Records and Reminiscences of

Yours truly,

F. C. BURNAND.

A SORT OF APOLOGY

IT has been suggested to me that I should write an "introduction." Formidable affair that. And why? Surely an "introduction" argues both parties unknown to one another, which, as regards the public and this present scribe, is certainly not the case.

Neither upon a short nor upon a long acquaintance would I so far presume as to drop in when not wanted, affecting, after the manner of the very ancient Paul Pry, to "hope I don't intrude." Heaven forbid that I should be so lost to all sense of humour as to take advantage of an amiably disposed public and insist upon "telling them the story of my life." Yet in these "reminiscences," which must of necessity be to a certain extent somewhat egotistical, as being autobiographical, I trust will be found not a little that is interesting or amusing, or both in combination. This concoction of mine I fear is rather a homely brew, and whether the worse or the better for that, it is not for me to decide, but such as it is, with all its demerits, all its imperfections on its head, I place it, diffidently, before my readers. With the tender-hearted man in Artemus Ward's story, who begged the diggers rough

and ready (with the revolver) among the audience at an Arkansas music hall "not to shoot the man at the pianner, as he was doing his best," I address myself to the kind consideration of such among my critics who may be inclined towards severity, and say, "Don't be hard on the scribe; he has tried to do his best."

F. C. B.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	I
CHAPTER I	
About Stoke Newington, etc., Albion Road, Church Street— Our Family there	22
CHAPTER II	
An Interim Chapter—Ten Minutes Allowed—Discursive— Concerning some Music—And Dances—Chatterton, Harpist—Jullien—Polkamanía—Albert Smith—Piatti —Koenig—Abbé Liszt	43
CHAPTER III	
Domestic Matters—Tales of Two Families—Aunts and Uncles—Introductory Studies—Dickens—Drama— Early Tastes—Music and Marriage	48
CHAPTER IV	
More Clergy—Father's Friends—Rouse—Rougemont— Bath—School—Master—Misses—Illness—Scene— Brighton—Dombey—Toots—The Rev. Mr. Young— Reading the Lessons—Ancient Farce—Amateur Boys —Sir Martin Archer Shee, <i>P.R.A.</i> —Scott's Novels— Hamilton Woodgate—Light Literature	53
CHAPTER V	
On the Road to Eton—Durnford—Judy—Hardships— Early School—Præpostors—Lubbocks—Refresh- ments at Joe's—Fagging—Miseries—"Sock-Shops" —Games—"Wet Bobs"—"Dry Bobs"—Sense of Honour—Boating—Music—Drawing—Tarver—	

	PAGE
Evans—The Provost—Bethel—Plumptre—Cokesley —Hawtreys—Strawberry Time—At the Wall—1851— Crystal Palace—Evans's—Imitations at Eton—Cider Cellars—Musical Finish	66

CHAPTER VI

Eton—Change of Scene—Durnford's to Cokesley's—Dis- cipline—Tutorial Visits—Smoking—Monsieur Malet— Youthful Author—Two Distinguished Characters— Ajax— <i>Vox Clamantis</i> —Explanation	97
---	----

CHAPTER VII

<i>Sic Transit Etona</i> —Illness—Dr. Goodford's Farewell— Interim Vacation—Lydia Thompson—Shaw Stewart— In Windsor Park—Rencontre—Duke of Cambridge —From Eton to London—River Trip—An Escape— Among the Camerons—Thompsons in Devonshire— Health and Happiness	113
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII

In and about Town—Laura—Thackeray—Cora Pearl— Agnes Willoughby—A Long Drive—Our Sad Experi- ence—Felbrigg—Taglioni—Carlotta Grisi—Evans's— Sergeant Ballantine—Judge and Jury—Foley Rooms— Other Haunts—Birthday—Up to Trinity—My First Play in Public—The Fitzgeralds—Merry Moments	129
---	-----

CHAPTER IX

An Extinct Race—Upware Republic—Downing College— Peculiar—Wines—Theatres—Past and Present—Refer- ence—Dr. Guest—High-Churchism—Simeonites— Actors—Horton Rhys—His Company— <i>Absits</i> — <i>Exeats</i> —Starting	154
--	-----

CHAPTER X

On Tour—Bath Manager—Plymouth—London—Marie Wilton—Buckstone—Paddy—A Momentous Interview —Back to Cambridge—Longs and Shorts—Coaching Days—Big Smith—Companions—Ecclesiastical—State of Parties—Arthur Ward—Freemasonry—Sir James	
--	--

	PAGE
Crichton-Browne's Poser—The Master of Trinity and High Churchmen—Bar or Church—Lightfoot—Harold Browne—Advice—Upton Richards—A New Departure—Cuddesdon	168

CHAPTER XI

From Cambridge to Cuddesdon—Liddon—Bishop Wilberforce—Archdeacon Pott—Golightly Trouble—A Vacation Trip—Difficulties—Benson—Cowley—Development—An Oration—A Terrific Scene—Next Morning—Friendly Party—Bishop—Architect	184
---	-----

CHAPTER XII

Among the Oblates—Visiting House—A Scene—A Friend in Need—Interview—Dr. Manning—An Appreciation—Companions—A Wonderful Sermon—An Old-World Celebrity—Père Ratisbonne—Another Future Cardinal—The Old School—Father Faber—A Decision—Old Story correctly Re-told—Farewell to St. Mary's	195
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII

Uncertainty—Friends—Edinburgh—Quintin Twiss—Joe Robins—Louise Keeley—Montagu Williams—Mrs. Keeley—Tom Pierce—Fitzgerald—George Meredith—"Pater" Evans—Duff-Gordons—Fred. Chapman— <i>Once a Week</i> —Charles Keene—Mark Lemon	219
--	-----

CHAPTER XIV

Rest—Novelty—1858—Theatres—Lincoln's Inn—Robson— <i>Medea</i> — <i>Dido</i> —Lacy, Kind and Crafty—My Rights—My Wrongs—Charles Young—Chatterton—Willert—Miss Wyndham—St. James's Theatre—First Night—First Piece—Critics—Marriage—Term-Keeping—H. J. Byron—E. L. Blanchard—Keeley—Montagu Williams—Robson and Emden—Olympic—The Benicia Boy—Feathers in Cap	231
---	-----

CHAPTER XV

In Chambers—Bourdillon—A. L. Smith—Alfred Wigan—Miss Herbert— <i>La Dame de St. Tropez</i> —Emery—Dewar	
---	--

—Belmore—The Old Arundel Club—Some Members— Clerkenwell Sessions—Legal Lights—Montagu Williams —Keeley's Ultimatum—Serjeant Bodkin—Old Bailey —For the Defence—Besley—Last Appearances—Work —Poor Pay—Thomas Knox Holmes—Committee Rooms—Hope Scott—Sam Pope—Richmond . . .	245
--	-----

CHAPTER XVI

Young Tom Hood—Saturday Night Contributors— <i>Fun</i> — Dinners—Difficulties—Brilliant Idea—Interview—Pro- prietor's Teeth—Rejection—A Visitor—Criticism In- vited—Argument—Reading-Vow—Reconsideration— Odd Coincidence—First Meeting—Mark Lemon—A Ride—Delight—Return Home— <i>Moheanna</i> —Unex- pected Success—Mr. Bradbury—Thackeray—Artists Collaborating	261
--	-----

CHAPTER XVII

First <i>Punch</i> Dinner—Mr. Bradbury—Another at Dulwich —Thackeray—Introduction—Memorable—Leigh and the Carriage—Some <i>Punch</i> Dinners—Chairman— Contributors—Thackeray—Leech—Horace Mayhew —Shirley Brooks—Charles Keene—Dotlets—Thack- eray on Yates—Thunder and Lightning—Storms— Tea Cups—From Labour to Refreshment—Saturdays— Then and Now—Professor Leigh—Brilliant Contrast— Up for Garrick—Other Clubs—Garrick Smoking-Room —To be Continued in our next	275
--	-----

CHAPTER XVIII

Johnnie Dean—Garrick—Preface to <i>Black Eye'd Susan</i> — Story of the Girl that ran for over a Thousand and One Nights—Retrospecting—Forwards!	290
--	-----

CHAPTER XIX

Mark Lemon in Retirement—George Sala and Shirley Brooks—Professor—Tom Taylor—Leech—Thackeray —Du Maurier—Sambourne—Tenniel—Our Rides— Outings—The "T.P.C."— <i>A Nos Moutons</i> — <i>Susan</i> running—Note on <i>Trilby</i> — <i>Experientia Docet</i> —Retros- pective—Prospective—Bunn—Bacon's—Arthur Bacon—Old Ship—Brighton—Nye Chart	305
---	-----

CHAPTER XX

	PAGE
Sothorn—The Supernatural—At Theobalds—A Disturbed Night—the Haunted Room—The Story—By Daylight—Its Moral—My Host's View—More Spirits—A Party—The Medium—Home, Sweet Home—Evening with Home—Snuff— <i>Séance</i> —Consequences— <i>Chez</i> Lord Dunraven—A Strange Story—No Solution	318

CHAPTER XXI

A Nicht wi' the Speerits—Mrs. Marshall—E. L. Blanchard—The Unexpected Happens—The Professional Medium—A Curious Story—Shirley Brooks, Detective . . .	334
---	-----

CHAPTER XXII

The Royalty—Henderson—Liverpool—Frank Musgrave—New Departure—English <i>Opéra Bouffe</i> —Farnie—Honour amongst Gentlemen—J. S. Clarke—At Edgware—Arthur Sketchley—George Rose—Collaboration—Sothorn—A Mistake— <i>The Headless Man</i> —The True Story of <i>The Colonel</i> —How it Failed at Rehearsal—Haymarket Trial Trip—Remarkable Success at Prince of Wales'—At Abergeldie Castle—By Royal Command— <i>Blue Beard</i> — <i>Ariel</i> —Colonel Collette—Harking Back—A Revelation—Freddy Clay Communicative—The Result	344
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIII

Theatrical Work—Mr. Punch's <i>Pocket-Book</i> — <i>The Almanack</i> —Mark's "Passes"—Humph Barnet—Orders—Sir Augustus—His Father—Our Business—Retracing Steps—Frank Marshall—John Oxenford—A Memorable Evening—"The Night of the Party"—George Rose	370
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIV

From Lowell to Choate—Phelps—Lord Pauncefote—Sir Francis Jeune—Bishop Magee—Canon Farrar—Sir George Lewis—Edmund Yates—De Lara—A Difficulty—A Trial—A Gent—Montagu Williams—Trial—Sir Reginald Hanson—Other Trials—Retracing Steps—Olympic	384
--	-----

CHAPTER XXV

PAGE

The à Becketts—Wybrow Robertson—Matt Morgan— A Charity Show— <i>The Tomahawk</i> —Celebrated Cartoon —Tom Taylor—Difficulties—Bennett—Benefit—Yates —Shirley Brooks—George Sala—Self-Burlesque—The Beefsteak—Pellegrini—The St. James's Club—The Wellington—Soyer's Symposium—The Cock—The Cos- mopolitan—The Skirrows—Charles Lamb Kenney— Jimmy Davison—Arabella Goddard—Clay—Cowen— Sullivan—John Oxenford	401
---	-----

CHAPTER XXVI

Sothorn's <i>Dundreary</i> —Catch Phrases—Bishop Colenso— Theological Pamphlet—Extracts	419
--	-----

CHAPTER XXVII

Rustem Pacha— <i>Fez</i> —Moslems—Christians—Richard Burton—Stanley—Irving—A Garrick Dinner—A Long Sitting—Herkomer—Portrait—Arrangement in Black and White—Sittings—Lulu Land—Inventive Genius— Theatrical Improvements—Experiments—Augustus Harris—Appreciation	424
--	-----

CHAPTER XXVIII

Cardinal Manning—John Bright—Jefferson—Sothorn as Dundreary—Dillon Croker—Kiki—Mark Lemon— Jimmy Davison— <i>Musical World</i> —Fred Clay—Arthur Sullivan—His Initials—Shirley Brooks—E.L. Blanchard —H. Byron—Meredith—At Esher—Burlesque Verse— Another George—Rhyme—Marie Wilton—Dion Bouci- cault—Taylor—Ben Webster—Miss Furtado—Two <i>Helens</i> —Dropping the Curtain—Finish	435
---	-----

INDEX	451
-----------------	-----

RECORDS AND REMINISCENCES

INTRODUCTION

"Why not begin at the beginning?
That is a way we can all understand."

La Cigale.

"*RESPICE FINEM.*" But as I am a very long way off from "tagging" the last chapter, not having, so far, penned more than three lines of my first, I do not think that, at the present moment, there is any absolutely pressing necessity why I should gravely consider what is the most effective way of crowning an edifice, of which I am at this present moment merely laying the first stone. The materials are at hand, may my selection of them be judicious!

I trust I do not in any way resemble our old friend, "the eminent tragedian," who in the most ancient kind of hackneyed melodrama would scowlingly advance to "the flote," and beckoning to his unwilling victim, would growl in his ear, "I will now tell you the story of my life. Take a chair." And then speaking "through music," and assisted only by a few short exclamations interjected by the patient listener, he would bore the audience for at least seven minutes, which seemed to his hearers a *très mauvais quart d'heure*. I place this figure before me only as something to be most carefully avoided. If I can succeed in inter-

esting and amusing, the end I have in view will have been attained; and so, "from start to finish," I hope to keep well in sight of me the motto with which the foregoing "*apologia pro vitâ meâ*" was headed, namely, "*Respice Finem.*"

I have been informed, and repeat the information, on the authority of an ancient mariner over eighty years of age, and of his corroborator, an old Deal pilot, that on November 29, 1836, there was experienced on the sea-coast the greatest gale of the last century. Its effects were especially felt all along the south-eastern coast, and Ramsgate, which as a rule escapes the full force of the worst weather, was not on this occasion exceptionally favoured. If stars and planets give omens, then may the winds and waves be credited with forecasting events, and that the wind was raised to such an extent on the day of my birth may in some way account for the difficulty I have experienced in "raising the wind" ever since I arrived at such an age as compelled my recognition of necessity as the prolific mother of invention. I think that on November 29, 1836, all the wind that could be raised *was* raised, and, there being no storage of force in my special behoof, the supply was then and there, as far as concerned my *caisse*, exhausted. It was very flattering, but scarcely considerate, of the winds to honour my birth with a "grand blow-out."

I was born on a Tuesday afternoon, just one quarter of an hour after midday, November 29, 1836, in the reign of King William the Fourth, who died on June 20, 1837, of which historical fact I, being barely eight months old, was not aware. This record may be taken as absolutely correct, since I copy it verbatim from an entry made in the ancient Family Bible by my father in a very clerk-like hand. My father was punctuality itself, and if not a thorough man of business, was professionally, as a stock-

broker, "a business man." I should say that his entry, made in the aforesaid Bible, coincided at least within a few minutes with my entry into the world. On the same page it is recorded, in the same clear and copybook-like hand, how my mother, whose maiden name was Emma Cowley, died on the 7th of December in the same year, and that my sister Emma died April 20, 1840, being then just five years old. Poor little soul! Do I remember her? I fancy I do. I have a vague idea that at that very early age our theatrical instincts were "predominant partners" of other instincts, and that at my little sister's instigation we used to arrange the nursery chairs so as to form a kind of stage on which we gave choreographic performances of a very primitive kind.

By the way, this same old Family Bible (still in my possession) is rather a curiosity in its way; I have seen nothing like it for size, weight, binding, and prodigiously large type, since my very earliest days when my father used to take me to afternoon service in Regent Street at a "chapel-of-ease"; and so it really was, as the seats, all in pews, were very comfortable, and the hassocks of the reddest, highest, and softest. Here one stout clergyman with a reddish face and large whiskers read the prayers and lessons, and when he had quite done, another and rather stouter clergyman was fetched out of what appeared to me to be a sort of side closet, where he had been kept (and really looking all the better for keeping) in reserve till called for by a black-robed clerk who, having conducted him, arrayed in gown and "bands," safely up to the third storey of the three-decked pulpit, shut him in, left him there, and then retired to the ground floor of the same edifice, where, resting calmly in his own private box, he surrendered himself to a quiet half-hour's snooze, in which, by the way, he had already been preceded by the surpliced

"cherub" with side-whiskers who "sat up aloft" on the second storey, not by any means "keeping watch o'er" the conduct of the congregation. Probably most of us went to sleep: I suppose I did, because my father never found fault with me for restlessness; or perhaps he himself had followed the excellent example set by the reader and the clerk, and had closed his eyes to the distractions of this world, while the reverend bluebottle in the upper storey of the three-decker, his head on a level with the gallery,—for there were galleries in those days,—droned on and on, prosing over his written, and perhaps purchased, discourse. Then at the familiar "tag" commencing "And now to," etc. etc., we all started up like so many sleeping beauties aroused from slumber, and after the ladies had bent their heads down and the gentlemen standing up had hidden their faces in their hats for a few seconds, just as they always did before the commencement of service, being supposed to indicate a *hat étude* of prayer, but more suggestive of close scrutiny to see that each man had got his own property,¹ we all surged out, the ladies and gentlemen with an air such as betokens those who have made an afternoon "duty-call." The children, with hope revived, returned to the outside world they had been forced temporarily to quit. They were evidently still oppressed by the consciousness of Sunday clothes, and by the strictness of the day itself, when all their toys were put away, when only goody-goody books were permitted, and when, except for the questionable enjoyment of a compulsory walk in one of the parks, Regent or Hyde, they, deprived of all amusement, were inclined, just for once in the week, to yawn early, and absolutely welcomed the hour when

¹ *A propos* of this custom, it used to be said, by somewhat irreverent jesters, that "every one in church studied the interior of his hat in order to remind himself of his Maker."

they had to "say good-night to papa and mamma" and nurse fetched them off to bed.

Sweet Sabbatarian days, how tedious, how monotonous, how dull for a child in London! In the country it was better, but even there Sunday was not the day that any child of my own age and acquaintance ever hungered for, whether at school or at home. Perhaps at school it was better, as there was a cessation of lessons; but then, *per contra*, there were lessons of another sort—catechism, for example, and Scripture reading, with explanation of collects and so forth. But taking one day with another in this earliest period of my life—I was sent to school when I was barely six years old—Sunday was more popular with us at school than ever Sunday was at home; that is, at most of the homes of my companions to which I was asked as a very youthful visitor, accompanied by my nurse. I fancy that it was in Mortimer Street that I first "carped the vital airs," but I am quite certain that before I had reached the appreciative age of five my father, a widower, having no wish to be burdened by an establishment, lodged in Brook Street, and thence migrated to Bond Street, where he rented the upper portion, unfurnished, of a house situated between Leader and Cocks' music shop at the corner of Brook Street, with Dolman's, the Catholic bookseller and publisher, on our left, in Bond Street. That this latter was the then well-known firm of Catholic booksellers and publishers, I was for many years as ignorant as I was of the very existence of Roman Catholicism. There was no display in Dolman's shop of any special articles of piety—there were no missals, rosaries, crucifixes, and so forth, exhibited; indeed, the appearance of the shop was that of an ordinary bookseller's; and here it was that for years I expended the greater part of my pocket-money in purchasing, and also in having bound, all sorts

of novels (the cheapest editions then published), including those by Harrison Ainsworth and G. P. R. James, which, having been neatly half-bound at this same shop, fifty-three years ago, are in my library to this day, and very little the worse for wear.

My father, being a stockbroker, was in the City from after nine o'clock breakfast until his dinner-hour, which was at that time about six or half-past. Sometimes in the summer he would ride into the City, which must have been a dull and dangerous way of taking exercise, send his horse back, and return to ride again in the park. I remember this quite well, as I used to be allowed to stand at the door, in custody of my nurse, to see him start, before I was taken out for a constitutional. My nurse's walks were generally in the direction of Soho Square, where, in one of the side tributaries, a court with no outlet, her sister-in-law lived. Into this blind alley ingress was obtained through iron posts looking like cannons stuck on end, muzzles upward, with a tight fit of half a cannon-ball squeezing itself out at the top. Some of these are yet to be occasionally met with in London, but there is a whole regiment of them at Swanage, near Bournemouth, where they were planted by the late Mr. Burt, Sheriff of the City of London, ironmaster, I think, who in fulfilment of a contract with the City had become possessed of this store of queer old London relics, valuable to no one in particular, and here reappearing as curiosities, keeping guard over the great globe, the castle, the mottoes, and the property generally of the eccentric and generous donor, who added all this "show" to the natural attractions of Swanage.

Through these posts from time to time my nurse and little self used to pass in order to make a morning call upon the aforesaid sister-in-law, Mrs. Davis, a hard-working elderly woman, who "went out a-charring," and let lodgings to respectable employés of small tradesmen, whose wants were

attended to by an untidy, scraggy-looking girl of about, I suppose, ten years old, very much down at heel, with very red hands, and bare, raw-looking arms that were awfully out at the elbows, and suffering from an absence of pocket-handkerchief. I hated her sniffing, but Mary Anne had to take charge of me, and as after all I was a very lonely little boy she used to be invited to my nursery to "keep company" and play with me. I remember how at these times she turned up very shiny, very yellow-soapy, with a smell of freshly washed things about her, a pink frock, and, actually, a pocket-handkerchief, in her hand, ready for emergencies. She was very deferential to *me*, very obliging, ate enormously, enjoyed sweets, and breathed heavily. As the lodgers at her aunt's (she was Mrs. Davis's niece) were, every one of them, out at work during the day, her domestic services could be dispensed with, and she generally sniffed herself off before my father came home, which he did as a rule soon after I had finished my tea with a select party downstairs, consisting of the cook, the nurse, the housemaid, Mary Anne, and an eccentric little man-servant called Robert Dantzie, the like of whom I have never seen out of a farce.

How I remember him! He was the life and soul of the kitchen, and, I believe, was invaluable to my father as a man of all work, who had been a sort of undersized under-study for the part of a waiter at the London Coffee House (I don't know where this was), and being too small for the place,—he wasn't much over five feet high, if as much,—he had accepted with avidity my father's offer, and had entered his service with an excellent character from the landlord and proprietor of the aforesaid London Coffee House.

He was a shrivelled-up, wizened, frosty-faced, bright-eyed little man of the kindest disposition, cheerful and as ready as the handiest man in the world could possibly be. If the cook was absent, he could do her work; he was in

himself a second housemaid ; and as to acting in the capacity of nurse to a solitary boy who was easily amused, why, he was as blithe as a canary at early morn, and as full of stories, all in dialect, Suffolk or Norfolk I think, as might be the best and most fashionable of raconteurs whose dinner depends on his wits and his excellent memory. A good voice too he had, a bit shrill and piping ; and then what strangely worded refrains and songs, which I applauded with all my might and main, not understanding a single word of any one of them. There was an uncouth chorus that even now, after all these years, recurs to me, and vividly too ; it was—

“ Rickäry cärry më,
Micklē mäck mäll mīngō,”

with the emphasis on the “ go.” When, years after, I read the song about “ Dick Turpin ” in *Pickwick*, wherewith Mr. Sam Weller delighted the assembled coachmen, I was struck I remember by its peculiar refrain and the lengthened-out drawl of the last syllables, and I felt sure that its *tune* must have been uncommonly like, if not the very one, that little old Robert Dantzie used to sing on festive occasions when, my father being at the opera or dining out, Sarah, the cook, entertained her cousin, Corporal Waters, the Lifeguardsman, and one or two other guests invited by my nurse and the housemaid. Had I not been present as a guest, I suppose, there would have been a difficulty, as otherwise I should have had to be put to bed early and to be attended to and looked after from time to time, thereby taking somebody away from the festive board in the midst of their enjoyment. Thus it chanced that I used to be, invariably, invited as a guest, placed near to cook who sat at the head of the table, and opposite the corporal on her left, whom, at first, I regarded with awe on account of his uniform and commanding stature, but came at last to learn to love (as the cook had done), and

to appreciate his powers of conversation, which were only excelled by his capacity for good feeding and drinking. Those parties were "small and (fairly) early." There was singing (of the song aforesaid) by Mr. Dantzle and the dark-eyed housemaid Anne, but before the turn came round to Corporal Waters, and before we had arrived at the sentimental toasts and sentiments, I had clambered on to my nurse's knee and had soon become insensible to all music, vocal or instrumental, until the early morning, when I woke up with a confused recollection of the happy past, but with one injunction firmly imprinted on my memory, namely, that I was "not to say anything about it."

I never *did* say anything about anyone or about anything that happened. I knew a lot, but, as a popular modern song has it, "I ain't a-going to tell"; no, not after all these years, though "I could a tale unfold" of the "high life" they led "below stairs," which perhaps may better serve my purpose as material for a "farcical comedy" with music, for our domestics were nothing if not harmonious. So let us keep on the drawing-room floor, if you please, and when the domestics are wanted we can ring for them; visiting occasionally the nursery, which, in this very nearly prehistoric time, represented no inconsiderable portion of the habitable globe where I lived, moved, and had my breakfast; while for my dinner at midday and "five o'clock" tea I had to descend into the lower regions, where I was always a welcome and rather spoiled guest.

One thing of importance occurs to me as worth mentioning before dismissing the whole household, nurse excepted, at one minute's notice.

"The child is father to the man," and at the age of five this child was passionately devoted to small theatres, with Skelt's scenes and characters, and boxes of paints. This, with spelling out easy fairy stories, kept me amused and

interested by the hour—much, as I now in later life perceive, to my nurse's great contentment. Most children delight in toy-theatres, and not only was I no exception to the rule, but I was able to show to what perfection the Early Nursery Drama could be brought.

I got on with my spelling and reading at a prodigious rate under the guidance of a Miss Nicholls, a day governess of the Cornelia Blimber type in appearance, provided at the instance of my aunt, my father's youngest sister, Miss Burnand, known in the family as "Toney," and of my maternal grandmother, Mrs. Cowley (the kindest, handsomest, and sweetest woman in the world, who preserved her almost unimpaired sight, her regular teeth, and good looks until well past eighty), who thought that I was not making the most of my early days by passing so much of my time within what I may term "the kitchen range." So I was provided with a governess, and soon got *Blue Beard* by heart, and could give a splendid performance of this immortal drama on the stage of the Theatre Royal Downstairs, in presence of cook, housemaid, the two or three visitors already named, and Robert Dantzic. The finish was magnificent; a perfect blaze of triumph, brought about by the ignition of some sulphurous powder (in a penny pan which became so hot that no one could touch it), that caused my audience to open the kitchen windows, the scullery door, and as quickly as possible to bundle me with my show out of the place, upstairs, and to bed; while thorough ventilation, wherever possible, cleared away the stifling smell and smoke caused by the burning of *Blue Beard's* castle and by the simultaneous illumination of a wonderfully effective scene, vividly painted by that great artist Skelt, showing how all the wives in the Blue Chamber had become vindictive skeletons; while one of them, the tallest and probably the most ill-used of the harem, was savagely pinning

the wicked Blue Beard himself with a dart, at which moment he ought to have descended through a trap-door and to have been let down to the depths below (represented by the kitchen table), on which my little show was erected, with no curtains or any scenery whatever to conceal the mechanism, that is myself, from the interested and uncommonly friendly audience, only that of course the trap-door couldn't be opened without my getting my hand in underneath and pulling Mr. Blue Beard through ; and in attempting this grand effect, I upset the entire stage ! over went the oil lamps (three small wicks in a tin case), all alight ; -over went characters, scenes, and three or four tins of red, blue, and green fire, which, if providentially they did not cause a grand conflagration, at least, as I have said before, scattered the audience right and left, and blew the manager, scene-painter, actors, actresses, prompter (with Skelt's book of the words), all together being "rolled into one" little boy of between five and six years old, upstairs and into bed as quickly as possible.

But, oh, that Blue Beard's blue chamber ! It was horrible, and got upon my nerves, so that often and often, when my nurse had gone down to supper and left me alone in bed, in company only with a rushlight, which illuminated the nursery through a lot of little holes perforated in its japanned tin stand, I saw in the shadows created by the rushlight, dreadful, flickering, moving, black shapes on the walls and furniture, and countless eyes, as it were, peering at me out of the walls. Then, in a corner where no light penetrated, there appeared the horrid skeleton with the cruel dart that pierced Skelt's Blue Beard, and gradually "she," "she who was to be obeyed" (it was intended for the ossified representative of one of Blue Beard's wives), was joined by all the other skeletons, and the little boy in bed screamed his heart out, and cried and yelled so loudly, that the piercing sounds actually "raised Cain," or rather

brought up my nurse from the depths below. She had hoped I was fast asleep by this time, and so, after soothing me—she never scolded, bless her—she determined to finish her meal up in the nursery, having prudently brought “the materials” with her. Then I slept; but never, never, never in all these years shall I forget that one night; and never, were I to live in history as a second Methuselah, could I forget it. “’Tis of such stuff as dreams are made of,” but sometimes ’tis lasting stuff that won’t wear out, and is ever as fresh in my memory as is my first night at my first school, whither I was sent, a little chap still in frock and pinafore, for there were for small boys, at that period, no picturesquely Vandyke-cut jackets, shirts to match, knickerbockers, and shoes or brilliantly buttoned boots. In those very matter-of-fact days tailoring and haberdashery combined to make grown-up men look ridiculously stiff; the “dandy” was gradually dying out with the “Count D’Orsay” period of fashion; the ladies were all curls and flounces, and the costumes of children, from babies in feathered hats to boys’ wide collars and peaked caps, were absurdly pretentious. What an ugly time that was for dress! Look at the soldier of the period with his stiff stock, and the unhappy “new” policeman with his top hat, his military stock, his belt, blue tail-coat, white trousers, and cumbersome boots. John Leech has them all in his early *Punch* volumes. As I am digressing, I may mention how well I remember the voice of the watchman in Bond Street calling, “past ten,” and, if I happened to be kept awake by a skeleton, not “in the cupboard” but on the nursery wall, “past twelve.”

Clearly can I recall the “galanty show” that used to be set up just close to our house every evening in winter nights about eight o’clock, where there was a drama acted by black profile figures on a brilliantly illuminated canvas curtain, the plot of which was as sensational as mysterious.

I remember well "May day" as celebrated by the small remnant of melancholy mummers going about the London streets; one was attired as a bedraggled clown, another as a "dandy," with whom came a fascinating columbine in dirty book-muslin skirts and soiled "fleshings," "a thing of beauty" to me as a boy, but by no means "a joy for ever"; and the mysterious Jack in the Green himself, who danced about within a bower of green leaves which he supported on his shoulders, with only his legs from below the knee visible, while his face could just be seen through a small hole, peering out like an owl in an ivy bush. There were sweeps, too, accompanying it, with shovel and broom, and a muffled man with pandean pipes and a big drum was the peripatetic orchestra. It was poor columbine's business to "smile and smile" as she presented a large silver ladle to such spectators as appeared at all likely to be generous towards art, whatever grotesque form it might take. The mummers are seen no more, "lost to sight, to mummerly dear!"

The school selected for my first appearance in the character of "The New Boy" was recommended by Aunt "Toney" and my Uncle Arthur, the latter of whom was at "Lloyds" with his father, and was acquainted with Mr. Dodgson, senior, and his son, Mr. William Dodgson, both "something in the City," whose sisters kept a preparatory school at Stamford Hill, within an easy drive for my aunt in her open trap from Stoke Newington, where she lived at home with her two brothers, Arthur Charles and Frederick, and my grandfather and grandmother.

But I will defer this part of my reminiscences till a little later, and give "La Famille Burnand" at Stoke Newington a chapter to itself. Its characters belong to such comedy as delighted Charles Lamb, and would have

served as excellent material for that other Charles, namely, Dickens the Incomparable.

I was taken to school by my nurse Mrs. Davis, who was in her way quite another Peggoty, and to whom I was as deeply attached as was little David to that excellent type of motherly woman.

Of course I was accompanied by a small hamper, the possession of which, however, could not console me in the agony of a first separation from the representative of all that was dear to a little boy in his little world. She bore up bravely, but we wept together until I was left to gulp down my sobs, standing on the doorstep in charge of the eldest Miss Dodgson, who held my hand lest I should suddenly take it into my head to follow Mrs. Davis as she waved her last adieu to me from one of the large gates that led out into the lane (I rather think it was called Springfield Lane), and then disappeared. I remember, clearly, being allowed, as a favour granted to a new and very small boy, to take tea with the schoolmistresses at their end of the long table where the boys, seated on long forms on either side of the tea-and-bread-and-butter board, regarded me furtively with no little curiosity, and, as I thought, with some dislike, owing to my superior position "for that occasion only," slightly suggestive of future favouritism.

After this I was introduced to a few choice companions, whose parents knew my father or some of my relatives "at home"—that is as a matter of fact in business, as the entire supply of boys at this establishment came from Stamford Hill, Stoke Newington, Upper Clapton, and the parts about, where City men belonging to Lloyds, to banks, and the Stock Exchange, had, at that simple time less pretentious than nowadays, their "local habitation," quite in keeping with their "name."

Whether a Miss Sharp had had the school previous to the Dodgson (or Dodson) family, or whether she sold herself as one of the fixtures to be taken over and further utilised by the purchasers, I am not certain, but of one thing I am very nearly sure, and that is, that a "Miss Sharp" (a lovely name for a tall, thin schoolmistress regarding us through spectacles astride a long and pointed nose) was, so to speak, "the superior" of the others, and at the head of affairs generally; and that this lady, as above described, was the eldest of four or five sisters, and was not Miss Sharp at all, but the eldest Miss Dodgson. Miss Sharp had something to do with it; perhaps had been equal to her name and had been sharp enough to part with the "flourishing concern" to the Dodgsons. On consideration I conclude that this was the case. Old Mr. Dodgson, although a "City man," was attired much as a clergyman used to be in those days (1843) when clerical costume was undistinguishable from that of a country farming gentleman or a partner in a bank. Of him and of his son William, who bore a strong resemblance to his sister, the eldest Miss Dodgson, only with neatly trimmed side-whiskers and a generally smarter air of dressiness, we saw hardly anything at all, except that we had an occasional glimpse of them in the early morning when they were brushing their hats in the hall previous to departing for their daily "work and labour, until the evening."

The sisters who managed and taught were the one just mentioned, who paraded the house in gloves, with a bunch of keys and a business-like basket, quite a "Betsy Trotwood"; the second, whose name I have utterly forgotten, and whose appearance I can recall only indistinctly, who devoted herself entirely to teaching, having nothing whatever to do with the household arrangements; the third, Miss Bessie, a very dry person, with sharp-pointed

fingers and mittens, and always extremely neat and a perfect pattern of tidiness; and the fourth was Miss Decima (why "Decima" unless there were or had been nine others?)—it sounded well "Miss Decima Dodgson"—totally different from all her sisters, except in her kindness; for they were all kind and gentle, even when they had to rap the knuckles of obstinately lazy or otherwise naughty boys with a ruler in order to "call them to attention."

We were all in love with Miss Decima, especially myself, and it was she who appeared before me as a bright, buxom, good fairy, with "comfortable words" (she did look comfortable!) after my wretched first night in the dormitory, where my torrent of tears and gulping broken-hearted sobs must have disturbed the placid slumbers of the other seven boys, all tucked up snugly in their little cots. I remember the maid letting down the old-fashioned shutters and admitting the light. Where was I? How was I? Miserable enough, and after a sad and sleepy toilet, in which we were assisted by a handmaiden who attacked our hair with vigorous brush and comb, we went down to prayers in the dining-room, a function whereat I had never previously assisted, having never seen or heard of the existence of such a devotional exercise as "family prayers," as of course my private worship had up to now been to say the Lord's Prayer and "God bless dear papa," with my knees on the carpet and my head in my nurse's lap, just at the last minute before being bundled into bed, and again in the morning immediately I was dressed and ready to descend for breakfast. These prayers quite astonished me: the eldest Miss Dodgson acted as chaplain, and her sisters as lay-clerks, while the boys were the congregation, coming in well and punctually with the "Amen." But "Amen" stuck in my throat as it did in Macbeth's, though for a very different

reason. The prayers recalled my own private devotions in my nursery, my nurse, and my home ; nor could I be comforted until Miss Decima had taken me in hand and consoled me with her kind manner, her cheery words, her bright smile, and the shaking of her beautiful light coloured ringlets. (You will find her type in one of John Leech's early pictures, where a little boy wants to kiss a big young lady under the mistletoe.) I was only six and she was probably twenty-five, but if I could have carried her off there and then I would have done so, defended her against all comers, and have become her devoted knight, slave, champion for ever ! To be her husband, bah !—such a thing never entered into my head. However, I was only “rising seven,” and from that day to this my passion has never been declared, and, though kept secret, it has done no such harm as that with which the “cankerworm” is credited. Oddly enough her Latin Christian name served me within the last few years for the name of the heroine who played the *title-rôle* in a comic opera adapted from a French one, *Miss Helyett*, and played at the Criterion Theatre. But, heavens ! what a leap from “rising seven” to forty-eight (“Who fears to speak of forty-eight ?” to adapt the Irish song ; and I willingly reply, “Not I !”), from a little boy just out of the nursery and at his first school, to myself as a comic opera librettist with all my experiences and “reminiscences.”

So I was comforted, and thenceforth my earliest school-days passed very happily ; I always delighted to get away for the holidays, always in tears on returning, overjoyed at the occasional visits of my Aunt Toney (with tips), and of my nurse (with hamper) ; until I had done enough in the preparatory way to prove myself ready for a higher grade in the educational system.

I remember we had a large playground at the back,

where there went on a considerable amount of fighting. We small and very small boys never gave practical effect to the early lessons contained in the once widely known moral poems by Dr. Watts—

“ Let dogs delight
To bark and bite,
For 'tis their nature to ;
Let bears and lions
Growl and fight ”—

But I have forgotten the last line, for a reason which will appear later in these reminiscences, and must not be obtruded here. Then it went on—

“ But children you
Should never let
Your angry passions rise,
Your little hands
Were never made ”—

And again, for the same reason, I must break off abruptly. We did fight over our games of ball and marbles (what boys play marbles nowadays ?), and were summarily fetched in, generally by Miss Fanny or Miss Bessie, the two policemen of the teaching family, and chastised. How chastised ? There was no birching ; but there was a ruler diverted from its original use for the purpose of rapping us over the knuckles and slapping our open palms. Of course we howled : this we did before we were touched, in order to soften the heart of the chastiser, and thereby induce her to temper justice with mercy. There were other punishments, due to the inventive genius of the more severe of the Dodgson sisters, one of which was a patent leather stock made after the pattern of the kind that the early Victorian constables used to wear (*vide* John Leech's pictures), which being strapped tightly round the neck, kept the sufferer's

chin up in the air, while a stick, like the handle of the sort of broom on which witches were from time immemorial supposed to ride to the moon "and sweep the cobwebs off the sky," was placed under our armpits so as to expand the chest, and then the culprit's wrists were so firmly bound together that fidgeting, except with the legs, was impossible; and in this attitude the culprit had to remain in a corner with his face to the wall during tea-time, when he could only hear the munching and the drinking and the scraps of the mistresses' conversation; while being for the nonce deprived of his usual buttered slices of bread, or bread sparsely treacled, and as the tears slowly trickled down his cheeks, his feelings being with difficulty suppressed, he had the opportunity afforded him of solemnly but silently vowing and protesting to himself that never, never, never would he do anything again that could possibly deserve so condign a punishment. When relieved, but not pardoned, the prisoner was regaled with a slice of dry bread and a mug of lukewarm milk and water. Another punishment was the back-board, which combines moral and physical improvement.

I remember I began learning music here. I think it was my dear Miss Decima who, with her own plump and well-shaped hands, started me in my scales. I was never afraid of *her*, and under her guidance made a fair commencement in music. Afterwards in the holidays, at my grandmother's house, I had to continue music lessons under one Mr. Longhurst, whose special patron was my Uncle Theophilus, at whose house in London, later on, I remember him as being, on Fridays, the invariable accompanist of the quartette party that regularly met for music first and dinner afterwards, especially dinner. One Mr. Frost was our writing master: I rather think he wrote books on the subject of caligraphy. And what I do above

all things recall is that all the boys learnt dancing, our teacher being a Mr. Noble, who, however mysteriously wrapped up on entering the house (but this, his arrival, as a sort of behind-the-scenes performance, I as a diminutive boy pupil was only once privileged to witness, and that was quite by accident), appeared in the play-room in a white doubly-tied cravat (like Mr. Dombey's white "choker" in the illustrations by "Phiz"), a very elaborate shirt frill, a blue tail-coat, with shining brass buttons, fastened in front, and showing only an inch of white waistcoat (double-breasted, I should say), and he was "continued in our next" with tight-fitting black pantaloons, terminating in silk stockings of a black stripe pattern, the entire costume being finished off with patent leather "pumps," very thin, very shiny, tied with large black bows. His hair was as brilliant as were his patent leathers, and tightly curled. "There's a picture for you!" You will see his counterpart in sketches by George Cruikshank. In his tail pocket he carried a "kit," *i.e.* a very small kind of toy violin, and this he would play all the time he was performing steps for our imitation, while "speaking through music," as the stage-directions have it, and directing our movements. He was a wonderful person, of very great importance. The Misses Dodgson would come in and watch—perhaps they also in private took lessons of him; probably Miss Decima did. We began with the "first position," and so mounted up the dancing scale by the aid of time and tune to quadrille, and thence . . . to polka! The polka, I suppose, had been then quite recently introduced. At all events we learnt it. I believe Mr. Noble had considerable experience, and I fancy that he was a *maitre de danse* at the Opera. But if ever there was a Professor of Turveydopian Department, assuredly Mr. Noble was that man. And what an appropriate name! The one Noble at our rather

bourgeois - class school ! How admirably might he have sung the verse in the *Bohemian Girl*, "My birth is noble," only he could not have continued "and unstained my crest," as hair-dye was startlingly evident on his Jove-like locks.

To our other accomplishments was added military drill by a sergeant in full uniform, of whom all that I can recollect is, that we regarded him with great awe, were very obedient to his word of command, that he spoke with some sort of a brogue, whether Scotch, Irish, or English north country, I don't know, and that he pronounced "one" as "wan." "Now when I say 'wan'" — he used to commence, and then followed the instruction. Before I retired from active service at the preparatory school I was using a dummy musket, could go through the drill—present, fire, come to attention—with all the alacrity of a modern volunteer, or the little performer in "Arthur's Show," as remembered by Justice Shallow. After the age of eight, I was superannuated, and was never drilled again, nor wielded musket more.

But before I entirely leave Springfield and the Dodgson sisters (ah, sweet Decima ! so "*buxom, blithe, and débonnaire*," "O sweet Anne Page !") I will, being in the neighbourhood, which we shall never again revisit, give a brief account of "*La famille Burnand*" in the Albion Road, Stoke Newington.

CHAPTER I

ABOUT STOKE NEWINGTON, ETC., ALBION ROAD, CHURCH STREET—OUR FAMILY THERE

MY grandfather was stone blind, and yet every day he went by omnibus all alone into the City to his office at Lloyds, and returned as he came, assisted by my Uncle Arthur, or, in his absence, carefully guided by the conductor at starting from the house, and on descending from the omnibus, and led into Lloyds by the beadle in attendance. He was so well known there, that, in the absence of either of his usual guides, he had no difficulty in arriving at his usual seat of business. Nothing irritated him when at home so much as his anxious wife telling him where to place his hand as he felt his way along the drawing-room wall to his favourite corner by the side of the fireplace.

“Damn it, ma’am,” he used to say in a petulant, old-fashioned way that I have since learnt to associate with the manners of Sir Anthony Absolute and the irascible elderly gentlemen of eighteenth century comedies—“Damn it, ma’am, I know the way!” These outbreaks used to frighten me at first, but as I noticed that my grandmother only took an extra pinch of snuff, while my uncles and “Aunt Toney” merely smiled, my nervousness was soon allayed, for I perceived that these fitful outbreaks were as “sound and fury, signifying nothing.” After I was six

years old I frequently passed a portion of my holiday time at my grandfather's in Albion Road, Stoke Newington, and I remember being always rather afraid of him, so that until I was addressed by my grandmother or aunt I would keep myself so quietly employed with an illustrated story book that my blind grandfather was quite unaware of my presence. He could be very merry at Christmas time, when he treated his grandchildren and their parents to a quaint old ditty about "The little farthing rushlight," which, as I suppose, had in his day been a popular comic song, neither worse nor better than any other popular song, modern or ancient.

The household consisted of my grandfather—I think his Christian name was Louis—my grandmother, Frederick the youngest but one of my uncles, Arthur the youngest, and Antoinette, known to every one in the least acquainted with the family as "Aunt Toney." Then there was a portly butler called "Sam," who, having been in the family for some twenty or thirty years, placed himself on the most familiar and confidential footing with his master and mistress—especially with the latter—and on an affable equality with all the sons and daughters, my uncles and aunts, married or unmarried, whom he had seen grow up under his care, since at various times he had been their nurse, guardian, tutor, playfellow, and general instructor as occasion might require. As I now see, this state of things arose from my grandmother's ignorance of English, and from her willingness to take life very easily as long as she was left with her cards, her snuff, and her Voltairian books. Although our family was originally Savoyard and Catholic, yet a branch of it in the Pays de Vaud belonged to the "Grey League" of the Protestant Swiss at the time of the quarrels between Austria, France, Savoy, and Spain. Whatever they had nominally become, the cast of countenance was most decidedly Jewish. As

far as I can remember, my grandfather was rather Jewish, while my grandmother (a Sapte) was undeniably so. Looking at their portraits, and remembering them distinctly later in life, I have no hesitation in saying that the Hebrew type is certainly prominent. Lewis (or Louis) Burnand, standing about five feet four, was an unmistakable Mosaic, as was also George, the eldest son, who on the Stock Exchange as a young man was nicknamed "the handsome Jew," and Arthur, the youngest, whom I have already mentioned as the bachelor of the family, living at home with his sister, was certainly of the same type.

Hebraic or not, originally the name is French-Swiss, and the family can be traced to Savoy. As to this Savoyard origin, all I have ever been able to ascertain was given me in a letter (dated December 30, 1878, *Tewin Water, Welwyn*) from my uncle George Burnand. He wrote: "I fear it will not be in my power to give you much information on the subject. A Duke of Savoy used to go to Meudon in the hunting season, and took with him his suite, a member of which was one named *Bournand*, as the name was originally spelt: he was a knight and a favourite with the Duke. He had the misfortune to fall in love, and married the girl, who may have been a milkmaid or a duchess—*Je n'en sais rien*—but his children were lawfully begotten, and from this union came the present generation of the Burnands. These Burnands were a fighting set, and were in the service of France, hence the *fleur de lys* and the bloody hand in the crest." My uncle then goes on to inform me that Colonel Burnand, "the present proprietor of the Château Burnand," would furnish me with details extending back three hundred and fifty years. It appears that my Uncle George paid this colonel a visit in 1851, "when he showed us his crest, which is the same as ours." Then he adds, "My grandfather, Paul Burnand, was the original importation from the Savoy.

He was an insurance and bill-broker." "There was," my uncle informed me, "a coachbuilder, in Bond Street, named Burnand, with whom I dealt when I was first married. He was of a Yorkshire family, but I could make out no more common ancestry for our families than Adam and Eve. I paid his bill, which was exorbitant, I suppose on the strength of his being a namesake, and he disappeared from Bond Street soon afterwards." There was a solicitor of the name whom I saw once. He was no sort of connection or relation, and I had no great desire ever to renew his acquaintance. And that is about as much as any one of the present generation of Burnands knows of a matter which is simply *une affaire de famille*, accidentally interesting to some few others besides the present bearers of the name.

Frederick was in no business : he had travelled a great deal, read a great deal, was a careless, rakish kind of person, dreadfully irritable and at perpetual feud with my aunt's favourite Spitz dog that she had brought from Switzerland. The barking and snarling of this dog drove my Uncle Frederick wild ; he would start up from his easy-chair, where after breakfast he was always reading some French or Italian book, and pursue the unfortunate Spitz into corner after corner, whacking at him with his napkin, he swearing, the dog snarling, and I on a chair with my legs tucked up underneath, frightened to death lest one or the other or both should go mad and wreak their rage upon me. How I trembled ! And how glad I was when Sam the butler entered on the scene to clear away, and when later on I was summoned to take a hand at some lessons with which it was considered advisable I should be employed during my holidays.

The governess who had brought up all the family from earliest childhood was a real character : she might, with black ringlet wig, lace ruffles, and queer shapeless gown, have walked out of an old-fashioned farce, or walked into one,

and have immediately taken her place by right of appearance and manner as one of the eccentric *dramatis personæ*. Never before or since have I ever seen anything like her off the stage, and very rarely on it. She must have been a clever woman, as she had educated the entire family from the commencement, had grounded them in all the elementary work, could speak fluently Italian and French, and was even in her old age (what age she was when I was between six and nine I haven't an idea, but she might have been over seventy, and looked twice as old as my grandmother) able to read without glasses and to act as companion to my grandmother, with whom she was on the most friendly terms, conversing with her in French and Italian. She was the butt of the entire family, who were, however, very fond of her, and wouldn't have parted with her on any consideration whatever, regarding her as a unique curio, which indeed she was. Her name was Tackle.

Arthur Burnand and Toney were devoted to music, opera, and theatricals. They always had one or two young ladies staying in the house, to one of whom my uncle was invariably supposed to be attached; but the ladies were changed from time to time, and my uncle remained a bachelor, as my aunt remained a spinster, until first one, then the other died, at about seventy years of age. They were devoted to children, and their married brothers and sisters had been thoughtful enough to provide a considerable number of additions to the Burnand family, on whom the bachelor uncle and maiden aunt could expend as much time and money, especially at Christmas time, as might seem good to them.

What Christmases these were! At first, of course, my recollection of them is now somewhat dim, but gradually as I arrived at the mature years of seven, eight, and upwards, I can look back on these Christmas festivals as occasions

ever memorable, serving me, many, many years afterwards, when my wife and I being the entertainers, our children were as I was when I used to be taken to my grandfather's house, as models, so to speak, for our home festivals and family gatherings, revived and renewed, after an interval of "many changing years." Such festivals have been among the happiest times of our lives, even though our happiness has gradually come to be tempered by some sadness. "How many old recollections, and how many dormant sympathies does Christmas time awaken!" exclaims Charles Dickens in his delightful and ever-fresh chapter concerning the seasonable festivities at Dingley Dell. And he continues: "We write these words now, many miles distant from the spot at which, year after year, we met on that day, a merry and joyous circle. Many of the hearts that throbbed so gaily then have ceased to beat; many of the looks that shone so brightly then have ceased to glow; the hands we grasped have grown cold; the eyes we sought have hid their lustre in the grave; and yet the old house, the room, the merry voices and smiling faces, the jest, the laugh, the most minute and trivial circumstances connected with those happy meetings, crowd on our mind at each recurrence of the season, as if the last assemblage had been but yesterday! Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasure of his youth, that can transport the sailor and the traveller thousands of miles away, back to his own fireside and his quiet home!"

The modern school of writers shrug their shoulders over this, and pronounce it "bathos or clap-trap." Personally I believe Dickens *felt* intensely every word of it; and, personally, I can read this passage over and over again, Christmas after Christmas, and exclaim, with the orator

who couldn't make a speech, without descending into bathos or becoming sentimental, "My own sentiments, sir, only infinitely better expressed."

However, this is not a disquisition on Christmas, nor an excursion into the small state of which Charles Lamb was "every inch a king"; so being only "reminiscences," as Mr. Sam Weller might have explained, "my wisdom and remarks are limited."

Whatever may have been our foreign origin, our keeping of Christmas was decidedly English. Perhaps it may be thus "kept" in the Pays de Vaud whence we came. From Switzerland also came the Sapte family, to which my grandmother belonged. She had foreign relations or connections by marriage. The Baron de Lom, or some such name, who, with the Baroness, paid a visit to Albion Road while I was there, when not a word of English was spoken by any one of the party, was her brother or brother-in-law. This made a great impression on me at the time, an impression deepened and made permanent by their present to me of some foreign sugary cakes like Bath buns, "only more so." They laughed very much at my attempts, under prompting, to thank them in French, and then they left. It was for me their first and only appearance, and I have not taken much trouble to trace them to their Swiss château, wherever it may have been.

Another couple of foreigners, an uncle of my father's, Count Louisy, accompanied by his son, once visited us. They were both handsome men, the latter, as I well remember, in uniform, but why in uniform when calling on my father in Bond Street I have not the slightest idea. I remember their manners and their moustachios, which frightened me. They dined with my father; they smoked during the meal, a proceeding that astonished me so considerably that for some length of time I was under the impression

that all foreigners smoked during meal-times, and, as I could not dissociate the youthful Count from his uniform, I concluded that most of them were soldiers. There was also a Madame Christine, very old and witch-like, who snuffed and played cards with my grandmother.

Since those very early years I have occasionally met with the names of Baron de Lom and Count Louisy in foreign journals, but never to my knowledge have I ever met with any descendants of these passing acquaintances of my earliest youth. They walked on, had their scene, which had nothing whatever to do with the plot of the piece, as far as I can make out, and then walked off again. *Sic transeunt* Baron and Count, and with them passed away long ago all chance of my coming into a foreign title, with lands in Savoy, and a castle picturesquely situated, overlooking a lake in a canton of the Pays de Vaud. Some thirty years ago, visiting, for the second time, Neuchâtel and the regions thereabout, while aboard a lake steamer, I fell into conversation with a parish priest, who, on learning my name, exclaimed, "Mais, Monsieur Burnand!" (he pronounced it "Bournong"), "C'est que vous êtes de notre pays," and forthwith proceeded to inform me how, in his parish, our name was so far from being uncommon, that he himself could point out to me "un boucher, deux ou trois boulangers, et, en effet, beaucoup, beaucoup, de gens; et," he added politely and emphatically, noticing perhaps a slight shade of disappointment on my countenance, "*et de très-bonnes gens.*" Then, on my expressing satisfaction with this testimony to the "niceness" of persons who might be distant relations (meaning, that is, their remoteness by the amount of mileage between London and the Pays de Vaud), he proceeded, as if recalling to his mind some facts which would give me even still greater pleasure, "Il y a un magistrat, un de mes bons amis, qui porte le nom de Burnand, et"—here he turned and directed

my attention to a castle in the dim distance—"voilà le Château Burnand appartenant à Monsieur le Baron qui porte le même nom. Oh, Monsieur," he finished, pleasantly smiling, as he helped himself to an enormous pinch of snuff, reminding me of my childhood's days and my grandmother's gold box of *tabac à priser*, always at hand, "Je vous assure que si vous voudrez me donner l'honneur de passer chez moi, je vais vous introduire à tous vos chers parents si longtemps perdus à vue, n'est ce pas ? et, à propos, notre canton est presque entièrement Catholique." This he added as being of special interest to me, in consequence of my having previously informed him "que tous mes aïeux avaient été Protestants, et, probablement, Lutherans ou Calvinistes."

There is a Swiss artist now exhibiting in the Paris Salon, M. Victor Burnand—I think it is "Victor"—who comes from the Pays de Vaud. He is a Protestant, so he informs me by letter. As by some *contretemps* I have invariably been in Paris when he has been in London, or *vice versa*, like the immortal and ever-recurring "strange case of Cox and Box," we have, as yet, never met.

At Albion Road, Stoke Newington, on most Sundays when my father used to take me down to see my grandparents, we used to meet representatives of French-Swiss families, all hailing, I expect, originally, like ourselves, from the Pays de Vaud.

There was a dry, snuffy old man, a Mister Schatzeler ; there were some Miévilles (with whom my father and uncles had been at school abroad), Louis Miéville, Amédée Miéville, a Chastelan, a Rougemont or two, a few Toulmins, the Rivazes (one of my aunts was a Mrs. Henry Rivaz), all of them with un-English names, and with decidedly foreign characteristics, specially in snuff-taking. All of them loved music more or less, except my Uncle Rivaz, who used to annoy me very much when I was quite a small boy by jocu-

larly saluting me as "Count."¹ I never could understand why. It amused *him*, but I never heard of its causing the slightest gratification to any one else, least of all to myself. I think I could have put up with his calling me "Count" had he made it worth my while, but while every one of my uncles, my aunts, as well as my grandmother and grandfather, invariably gave me handsome Christmas boxes (all in new silver, too!), my uncle Henry Rivaz never gave me a single sixpence, but would only laugh, pinch my ear (I resented this; why didn't he shake hands properly?), and say, "Hallo, Count!" Only this, and nothing more. Some affections may be priceless; I could name the value of mine from half a crown upwards. Thackeray was right when he rejoiced in giving a tip to a schoolboy. "It blesses him that gives and him that takes."

They were all fond of the theatre, and on more than one occasion had given (it was before I was old enough to be invited) representations which, as I was afterwards informed, were far in advance of the usual "amateur theatricals." They were fortunate enough to secure the services of Stanfield and Roberts,² then not Academicians, to paint the scenes of *Who's your Friend*, or *The Queensberry Fête*, a piece written by J. R. Planché for Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews, which had been performed for the first time at the "Theatre Royal, Haymarket, on Tuesday, August 22, 1843," when Charles Mathews played the countryman, *Giles Fair-*

¹ As far as the Herald's Office was concerned, I have no doubt that for fees up to a considerable amount they would establish my claim to the rank of a chevalier in Switzerland. But the luxury was too expensive; so the Herald's College may say to me, "*Point d'argent, point de Suisse.*"

² This is legendary. In 1822, David Roberts (future R.A.) painted scenery for pantomime at Drury Lane. Twenty years after this, Mr. Field Stanfield informs me, his father and Roberts were commissioned by Arthur and Theophilus Burnand.

land. The *Countess of Rosedale* was impersonated by Madame Vestris (I think Mrs. Augustus Toulmin played it on the occasion above mentioned), and Mrs. Glover was *Lady Bab Blazon*.¹

These "real theatricals" I never saw. What we, the little grandchildren and nephews and nieces, were treated to was a performance on a toy stage. Arthur Burnand, with his sister Toney, had made a perfect model of a stage, with wings, flies, traps, lights above and below, about five feet in height, and, I should say, about four feet in width. It was worked by my uncle, aunt, and some young lady

¹ *À propos* of *The Queensberry Fête*, I find that at the Haymarket, under the management of Mr. Benjamin Webster, this piece, having proved a "triumphant success," was announced for every night, with *The Wedding Breakfast*, "until further notice," in which pieces there appeared Mr. Charles Mathews, Madame Vestris, Mrs. Glover, Mr. Buckstone, Miss Julia Bennett ("pretty Miss Julia Bennett," whom I remember as still "pretty" and bright many years after), Mr. W. Farren, son of "Old Farren," actor and stage manager; Mr. Strickland, Mr. Tilbury, and Mrs. Namby ("her first appearance since her severe indisposition"), all names of favourites with the theatre-going public at that time, and some of them not likely to be forgotten, for the great actor's fame lives as long as a great statesman's. At the end of this programme (from which I copy by the kindness of Mr. Dillon Croker, who is a collector of these dainties), Mr. Ben Webster offers "a prize of £500, with contingent advantages, for a prose comedy in five acts, illustrative in plot and character of modern British manners and customs." In these days there were very few long runs, the work of the actor was considerable, the changes of bill frequent, and the prices "in front" were: "orchestra stalls" 5s. each, which could be "retained the whole evening"; so it is evident that the pit did not then reach right away down to the orchestra, as it most certainly did later on, when the stalls had been removed, and when until the Bancrofts reconstructed the theatre, it was all pit from the back right up to the orchestra, as it was also at the Lyceum; "first price—boxes 5s., pit 3s., gallery 2s., upper gallery 1s."; and "second price at nine o'clock—boxes 3s., pit 2s., gallery 1s., upper gallery 6d.; private boxes two guineas and one guinea and a half each." Rather a difference from the modern prices, and the Haymarket was a representative of quite tiptop prices.

friends. They painted the scenery, dressed the dolls, contrived the machinery,—I remember some witches going up in a balloon, to enthusiastic applause from a crowded juvenile audience in the front drawing-room,—designed wonderful processions, making some of the figures likenesses easily recognisable by their young “friends in front,” who would cheer, shout, and laugh at the appearance, for example, of the old governess, Miss Tackle, already mentioned in this veracious history. The play was a collaboration of all the talents, and all the talents learnt it by heart, each person taking two or three characters, and invisibly acting up to the part in differentiating peculiarities of voice and intonation.

At this distance of time, I am sure it was very clever. Years after, I saw that old stage laid aside up in a lumber room. Since then I have seen not a few stages in theatres that have been “to let,” and frequently have I recalled to mind the appearance of this toy stage *en décadence*, put aside, not “for alterations and repairs,” not for sale, not with “a lease to be disposed of,” but broken up, and gone, gone for ever, with its little doll Cinderellas and Blue Beards, Dick Whittingtons, Beauty and Beast, all the doll-and-pasteboard company, and most of the living company, too, that constituted the players and the audience.

To the earliest days of Thespis in the nursery and these puppet performances just recorded, illustrating, as did the latter so many of the dear old fairy tales, and all written in verse, I may fairly attribute my first inclination towards the lighter form of drama, although none of my contemporaneous cousins took the theatrical fever; that is, so far as I am aware, or if they did, they very soon recovered from it, and applied themselves to the practical work of picking up gold and silver in that vast Tom Tiddler’s ground whose centre is the Stock Exchange.

My Uncle Arthur had literary tastes too, and he, with a few other friendly neighbours and visitors, formed a small society, meeting at one another's houses and reading aloud their stories and poems, which they subscribed to have printed privately and presented to friends. One volume only have I seen of this work, which must be almost priceless on account of its extreme rarity. Whether there ever was a second volume no one acquainted with the first has ever taken the trouble to ascertain, otherwise I must at some time or other have heard of it. The unique collection of which I speak was called, I fancy, "Mildred" something or other. Much later on, being enthusiastic on this subject, I induced my favourite cousins (the George Burnands, in whose company I spent most of my holidays, who lived in Sussex Square when my father moved to Sussex Place) to form a literary *coterie* on the lines of the Stoke Newington one that had been so successful. We all wrote our stories : mine was a really ambitious story, probably quite unoriginal, and founded on something I had read ; it was, I remember, received politely, not to say deferentially. But the utterly ridiculous nonsense written and read aloud by my eldest cousin, Ellen, who was brimming over with genuine fun and animal spirits, so put my magnificent effort, and every other, into the shade, that the members of the literary club were all convulsed with laughter, and being unable to take the matter seriously, the club was dissolved, and, after that first memorable gathering, ceased then and there to exist. This, however, by the way. As I pause on the doorstep before quitting Albion Road for good and all, I must take the opportunity of telling one or two "tales of my grandmother."

I have said Mrs. Burnand was a Swiss ; she could speak French and German fluently. All her reading was in one or other of these two languages. English she never suc-

ceeded in acquiring. She could neither write it intelligibly nor speak it without making the most absurd mistakes. Of course this to me is traditional, as all that I as a little boy recognised was that she "talked in such a funny manner," so that I could only with difficulty understand her, except at Christmas time, when her good wishes were emphasised, and made perfectly intelligible through the golden medium of half a sovereign. Being somewhat infirm, she remained in her arm-chair the greater part of the day, snuff-box at her side, foreign book in one hand, big coloured pocket-handkerchief in the other, wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, which she only used when reading. She was devoted to whist and, I think, to piquet; but I doubt if there were many evenings in the week without the square green-cloth table being unfolded, the candlesticks placed at opposite corners, counters being brought out, with two or three packs of the very best duty-paid cards. Then, my grandmother, with a Rev. Mr. Gregory, a Mr. Schatzeler, and a fourth player whom I cannot put a name to, though I have a sort of idea that it was either Cumming or Hemming, would sit down to play. Mr. Cumming used to have occasional fits of spasms, when he straightened himself out and became rigid for the space of some five minutes or so, during which time my grandmother, who was the unfortunate gentleman's partner, would lay down her cards and exchange prodigious pinches of snuff with Mr. Schatzeler, one of her opponents, while any little boy like myself who happened to be present was frowned at and told not to take any notice of the sufferer, who, at the expiration of the usual period allotted to him for a fit, would wake up, look about for a second, say something like "Hullo!" as if surprised at finding himself there, and then, if it was his turn, proceed to play as if nothing unusual had happened to interfere with the regular course of the game.

I have mentioned the Rev. Mr. Gregory. He was a regular visitor at Albion Road, but whether he had a curacy or a living in the neighbourhood, or was a clergyman unattached, I have no idea. What I do remember is his very Jewish face, his glossy black ringlets, his low waistcoat and white tie in the daytime, and in the evening the only change in his attire, which would nowadays be considered horribly unclerical, was that he wore patent leather dancing pumps with bows, and the front of his shirt was decorated with a very finely got up frill. His costume reminded me of that worn by Mr. Noble, the dancing master already mentioned, and indeed the Rev. Mr. Gregory was generally spoken of as "the dancing parson." Also, he wore a "fob," that is, a small watch-pocket, in the waistband of the trousers, whence dangled some gold seals suspended by a black riband. By the way, my eldest uncle, George, wore this sort of costume until very late in life (he was over ninety when he died); in fact, I doubt whether he ever altered the style of his pantaloons or frilled shirt fronts.

This Rev. Mr. Gregory was what was not only a "dancing parson," but also a card-playing parson. Whether he was popular or not with his parishioners, if he had any, I have never heard; but I am sure that he was considered by my grandmother only in the light of being always available to make a fourth at whist, or to take a hand against dummy, to bring all the news of the neighbours, and amuse her with plenty of gossip, spiced no doubt with a pinch or two of scandal, over a cup of tea taken with some beautiful hot buttered toast (this was a real treat for me) at about five o'clock on a winter's afternoon.

When my grandmother was thought by her doctor to be seriously ill, Mr. Gregory, calling as an old friend to inquire after her health, was (I remember being told) most grieved

to hear of her sad state of health, and it suddenly occurring to him that, in his clerical capacity, he might administer professionally such consolation as did not fall within the scope of the medical practitioner's art, he was shown into her room, and found her sitting up in her arm-chair, the French book in one hand and the bandana in the other, the snuff-box being on the table at her side, just as usual. She laid aside the French novel and took her snuff-box.

"Ah! my dear Mister Grregorry" (quite this number of "r's" in the name as she pronounced it, sounding them gutturally), "I am not ve-ry vell." Here she offers her snuff-box, and he takes his usual complimentary pinch.

"I have come to see you, my dear madam," says he in his suavest and gravest manner, "and to ask you, er—to consider—the—er—serious state—of health in which you—er—now are."

"My dear Mis-ter Grregorry," she replies, "dat vat you zay is l'affaire—ze af-fair of my médecin."

"Ah! my dear madam" (they were always so polite then!), "I do not come to—er—interfere with the—er—doctor's province . . . I speak as a—er—clergyman. Now, if I can talk to you—or read the Bible—or—er—in any way"—

His brief address was cut short by a very distinct "hum," uttered by my grandmother, who, after inhaling a tremendous pinch of snuff, shut her eyes, used her red pocket-handkerchief, nattily dusted any particles of snuff from her lace collar, and then, smoothing her black satin dress, leaned forward, and looking Mr. Gregory straight in the face, asked: "Mr. Grrregorry, my dear, vas it a pleasant dance you had last night at ze barty vere you vos?"

That was all. The Rev. Mr. Gregory followed her lead, as he had been ever accustomed to do when her partner at whist, and never again repeated his attempt at performing

the part of a minister of religion in this very astute old lady's presence.

In writing to her married daughters (and I remember to have heard of her as an excellent, though somewhat puzzling, correspondent, in consequence of her mixing up French, English, Italian, and German), she never could punctuate at all correctly. This, of course, made the muddle worse confounded. One of her daughters remonstrated with her. Her mother took it quite seriously, bestowing her utmost attention on the lesson, and taking it in through her nose (as Joey Ladle took the wine fumes in "through the pores"), with numberless pinches of snuff.

"I will not forget dese stops. You shall see." And she did not. The very next letter that her eldest daughter received from her only differed from the previous ones inasmuch as it was written *without any punctuation at all!*

"Oh!" exclaimed my aunt impatiently, "it is worse than ever!" And she was about to put it down unread when some curious hieroglyphics on a loose sheet accompanying the letter, attracted her attention. "What on earth is this?" she exclaimed, regarding in utter astonishment the paper over which apparently curious insects previously dipped in ink had been crawling. There were row after row of commas, colons, semicolons, notes of admiration, notes of interrogation, dashes, and so forth—a mixed lot of about a hundred or so all told—and at the foot were these lines in my grandmother's small foreign handwriting—

"My dear you complain yourself that I put not some virgules ce que vous nommez stops to the words that I write in my letter to you voilà I send to you un tas de virgules points and all that which is of the best and you will be able to place them just where you please ça vous ira ma chère Julie n'est ce pas."

On one occasion a M. Hauzmann, a very dirty, untidy German, a professional pianist and occasionally a last resort

when my grandmother was hard up for a fourth at whist, complained that he could not take his usual place in the rubber as he had such a cruelly bad headache.

My grandmother being disappointed of her game, and perhaps doubting the truth of the excuse, said to him, "*Ah, mon cher Monsieur Hauzmann, Je vous donnerai une ordonnance. Rentrez chez vous, prenez un bain chaud, très chaud*" . . . then she added slyly while relishing a pinch of snuff, "*et ça . . . avec beaucoup de savon.*"

She outlived my grandfather by some years, and I remember hearing of her death while I was at my third school. I also distinctly remember being told by my Uncle Arthur how he and my Aunt Antoinette ("Toney") were both present at their mother's last moments; how she dozed a great deal, but in her wakeful intervals was perfectly sensible, conversing freely with those who were present; and invariably, the ruling passion being strong in her to the last, asking for her snuff-box and taking a pinch with the greatest possible relish. Indeed, with her very latest breath she requested that they would move her into a sitting position in bed propped up by pillows and supported by the arm of her devoted and favourite son Arthur. Thus sitting in bed she made a sign for her snuff-box, which was at once handed to her. "Then," as my uncle related, "she let it drop on the counterpane, her right hand fell at the same time; I heard one long sigh of relief, and there was the end."

Not so very long after this the house was given up, and brother and sister came to London.

London was a difficulty to my aunt, who loved the semblance, at least, of a country life. As she could never be happy without a garden, a dog, a horse and open trap (she was a born coachwoman), and some sort of a place representing a miniature farmyard, with egg-laying hens which in company ("limited") of a real live cow could

provide the household with such luxuries, in the way of real new-laid eggs and genuine milk, as London could not find it in its heart to give, my aunt's proclivities had to be considered; and so brother, with his artistic tastes and his love for town, and sister, with her love for country, met each other half-way, and most happily pitched upon a house in the suburbs, at that time quite countrified, and at the very corner of Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park. This house stood well away from the main road, that is the old turnpike road, close to the toll gate (fancy a turnpike gate in South Kensington! ¹), which had two "bars" (there was a kind of village "public" near with "refreshment for man and beast," but I don't include this), of which one prevented travellers, carters, coaches, and so forth, entering town from the western country-side without payment, or without showing their ticket from their last 'pike, while the other brought those to a standstill who were journeying to London from the south-west. Here they hit upon a delightful old-fashioned house that, having probably "once upon a time" been a small farm, still showed some evidences of its original purpose in having retained a large garden, good stabling, a poultry yard, small grazing meadow for the cow, and a paddock.


This quite reconciled my aunt to being so close to London, where, had she consulted her own tastes, she would never have chosen to reside. Arthur's tastes, however, were artistic; he loved pictures and their painters, music and musicians, was himself a very fair tenor; and while at

¹ "The Kensington turnpike" was on the high road out of London, along which Mr. Pickwick, his companions, and Sam Weller with Captain and Mrs. Dowler, rode together in one of the four-horse'd coaches that took this route to Bath, starting early in the morning from the White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly, and arriving at their destination about seven o'clock in the evening. *Pickwick* was written between 1836 and 1837.

Albion Road the pair used to give Sunday evening concerts, in which from time to time some more or less distinguished professional friends used to take part.

I was taken to the opera by my father very early in life. He patronised Covent Garden with Grisi and Mario, while Arthur and Theophilus (who came second in the family list of uncles) were strong partisans of Her Majesty's, with Jenny Lind and Lablache as the great attractions (Lablache was an enormous attraction, being Falstaffian in size and weight . . . and to think that the *Merry Wives of Windsor* was not composed until long after the only man who could, in every sense, have filled the part was dead and buried !), with I rather fancy Lumley at the head of affairs,—but it may have been even before his time. The Stoke Newingtonites looked on Covent Garden as, from an operatic point of view, heretical; while in the opinion of the Covent Gardenites there were no singers to be named in the same breath with Grisi and Mario, nor any orchestra equal to that of which Costa was the conductor. My father always waxed very warm over this matter, and I rather fancy that, as there were three to one against him, and more than that when musical guests, all with Jenny Lindian proclivities, were present, he found himself in so decided a minority as to reduce his personality to a mere cipher. To me he would confide, without fear of contradiction, his sentiments of contempt for the musical opinions he had been forced to listen to, as we drove back to town in the snug brougham, while he soothed his ruffled feelings with a fragrant cigar, and listened to my filial and courtier-like remarks, which it is needless to say were in entire agreement with every expression of the paternal taste and sentiment. But this was when I was between twelve and thirteen. Between thirteen and fourteen I was actually permitted to join my father in a cigar, just by way of a treat, he having previously

discovered that I with my cousins and a young friend or so from school had acquired a taste for his Havannahs. Thus I began smoking early. I am not aware that it has done me any particular harm, but neither has it done me any particular good. However, "the faculty" are, I believe, unanimous in insisting that the later in life smoking is taken to, the better for the smoker; that moderate smoking is better still; and no smoking best of all. *Soit.* I remember the few occasions of my being permitted to indulge in this luxury, and how I thought what a man it made of me, for at least half an hour or so,—I was never ill from smoking,—and as I recall these episodes, Albion Road, operatic discussions, the brougham, the cigars, the drive home at night, all suddenly fade away out of my memory! I fancy the utter rout and defeat of my father in the Jenny Lind controversy settled the matter, and here the curtain falls for good and all on scenes in the family life at Stoke Newington, a place I have not since revisited except, now I think of it, once, when I rode there just to see how much of the place I could recognise. There was so little left of the original that, but for one or two landmarks, such as the old church and the name of Church Street, I should have quietly ridden through it without recalling a single association of a childhood and a boyhood to whose happiness this place had, in a general way, greatly contributed.



CHAPTER II

AN INTERIM CHAPTER—TEN MINUTES ALLOWED —DISCURSIVE—CONCERNING SOME MUSIC— AND DANCES — CHATTERTON, HARPIST — JULLIEN—POLKAMANIA—ALBERT SMITH— PIATTI—KOENIG—ABBÉ LISZT

I HAD always been interested in music, and as quite “a mere boy” I had been frequently taken to concerts and musical entertainments at Hanover Square Rooms, where I well remember hearing Thalberg play. He had a quiet, easy style with, as it seemed to me, marvellous finish, and held his audience entranced. Another pianist of quite a different “order of merit,” but, I believe, in the very first rank of her profession, was Madame Dülcken. I have never forgotten her appearance on the raised dais. My memory (that of a boy of about seven or eight years old, I suppose) preserves her (and a remarkably well-preserved woman she is, and perhaps was at the very time I saw her) “in my mind’s eye” as a very fine woman, not tall, but inclined to *embonpoint*, with small, chubby, dimpled hands, and magnificent arms bare up to the shoulders, and shining like tinted ivory against the background of a deep purple-dyed velvet dress. She wore glittering bracelets, that she removed before playing, and then, *incedit regina*, she went to work in a regal, nay, in an imperial style, that showed the keys no mercy, whacking, so to speak, the tune out of them, and creating

a marvellously brilliant effect in musical pyrotechnics. I remember the enthusiasm that, testifying to the delight of her admirers, seemed to salute her with the hearty Irish wish of "More power to your elbow." I must have heard her on not a few occasions, and this is the impression I have of her playing as compared with Thalberg's.

Chatterton on the harp I heard, and in Jullien's time Herr von Koenig on the *cornet-à-piston*. This was when the polka had just come into fashion, and was all the rage everywhere. At Vauxhall out in the open, at Cremorne, at the Argyll Rooms, and the other dancing places of more or less repute, at every ball, "hop," or party in Belgravia, Tyburnia, or Bohemia, everybody was polka mad. The "polkamania" seized everybody. There wasn't a ballet or extravaganza without its being danced in costume, and words set to its tune. *The Man in the Moon*, Albert Smith's comic paper, published a polka of its own, following the example previously set by Mr. Punch, not in a Christmas number, but in one, if I remember rightly, appearing about Christmas time.

The *valse à deux temps*, which ousted the *valse à trois temps*, never created so great a *furor* as did the introduction of the polka. It was the crowning effort of "Mons." Jullien at his monster concerts, and Koenig must nearly have blown his brains out in his strenuous efforts to comply with the vociferous encores called for by audience and dancers on the floor of Covent Garden Opera House during the Jullien era.

To account for the universal popularity of the polka is easy. It was a case of the masses *versus* the classes, and the masses won. Why? Simply because the polka appealed to that vast majority of dancers everywhere, in all grades of society, who, especially in the case of the male dancers, find it utterly impossible to keep their heads in a valse, especially with a fast partner and one who is "game" to go on as long as life and music last, but by strict attention to business can

jog along comfortably to four-in-a-bar time, and, becoming assured of safety, can indulge in a few fancy steps, backing, reversing, and even changing arms *ad lib*. The mildest-mannered man that ever figured in a galop at the finish of a quadrille, or a country dance, soon discovered that he could easily acquire a reputation as quite a gay votary of Terpsichore by learning and dancing the polka. "The new polka" was a social leveller, not in the sense that the mad *galop* or fast *valse* had been, when the inefficient, who soon lost his head, concluded a succession of bumps by sprawling on the floor, dragging his unhappy victim of a partner with him, but as a sort of go-as-you-please-in-four time dance which would let in a lot of outsiders; and so for one who sat out after a quadrille and waited patiently for another, there were now fifty, who, at the sound of the polka, started up, obtained partners, and danced for all they were worth, and more.

The *valse à deux temps* came in as a relief, but for many years the polka held its own, and, danced in a comparatively free-and-easy manner in the disguise of polka-mazurka or modern schottische (the old one was "tricky"), it still figures occasionally in the evening programme of our own day, especially on the Continent.

The dance has led me away from music and its exponents.

I have mentioned two celebrated pianists whom I remember, and Koenig, the exquisite performer on the *cornet-à-piston*. Piatti, the little violoncello-player, with whom, through my uncle's stringed quartette evenings, I had "scraped" acquaintance, is of a later date; he was a queer little person, rather "a gay dog" when you came to know him, and one of the "Joachim Quartette."

With Madame Schumann in later years I had a slight acquaintance. Her playing was delicious, her feeling exquisite. She never could completely master English. One day, in early spring, I remember well complimenting her on

looking so well. She was sitting by the fire and had not been out. She replied—

“Ach, my dear friend, I am not vell. I ave send for doctor ; he tell me der is someding de madder mit my ins.”

After that I made a rule of inquiring most affectionately after madame’s “ins.”

The most interesting figure among all the musicians with whom I have had but a passing acquaintance was the Abbé Liszt. His work I knew ; of his career I had heard much. His history in the past was public property. His temperament had crossed his genius, and only in the last years of his life, on the occasion of his second visit to this country, when “repentant ashes” had been strewn upon his head in the shape of his long, thick, white locks, and when he had devoted himself mainly, if not entirely, to sacred music, did we in England see the gentle, amiable musician, whom all who knew him loved, the venerable Abbé Liszt.

For an hour or more have I sat entranced, as, at the house of a friend where he stayed during his last visit to London, Liszt sat at the piano while his fingers wandered in rhapsody over the keys. He was repeating his own compositions, he was taking almost unconsciously fresh themes, developing them and playing on, holding us all spellbound in silence. That was such playing as never before have I heard, as never in this world do I expect to hear again. It was in its way a realisation of Dr. Newman’s well-known glorification of music. On this occasion Liszt did not descend from his platform in our friend’s private concert room to be congratulated, but while the last sweet notes of his playing were yet lingering in our ears, he quitted his seat, and, by a side door in the gallery, disappeared. Our host, on bidding us good-night, apologised for his guest’s not being with him to receive our congratulations, thanks,

and adieux, but the playing had overcome him, and this truly "grand old man" had thus bidden us, silently but eloquently, farewell. That evening is indelible in my memory.

On the next occasion I met him at St. James's Hall, at a concert given in his honour. I was glad to be of some use to him in London, as, not wishing to attract attention by publicly appearing at mass on Sunday, he was enabled, by the courteous kindness of the Oratorian Fathers, to hear mass from the private "tribune" in their church. By the way, I may mention that the Abbé was not a priest, nor had he ever gone farther in the ecclesiastical state than taking the "tonsure," a step that everywhere entitled him to the title of "M. L'Abbé," that is "The Reverend," and enabled him to hold certain clerical appointments (at the wish of Pius IX., who was one of his great admirers), without any of the obligations attached to the "sacred orders" of subdeacon, deacon, and priest. Beyond this first step he never went.

In this discursive chapter I have mentioned the Hanover Square Rooms, where I first heard Madame Dülcken. Here also in my very early days I heard the marvellous John Parry, but as I had the great pleasure of his personal acquaintance in later life, I will keep back my recollections of him until I come to mention the German Reeds, Arthur Cecil Blunt, Corney Grain, and the many other "entertainers" whom I have known and whose *forte* was the piano. The "operatics" shall have a space to themselves.

This variation being ended, I return to the original theme.

CHAPTER III

DOMESTIC MATTERS—TALES OF TWO FAMILIES — AUNTS AND UNCLES — INTRODUCTORY STUDIES — DICKENS — DRAMA — EARLY TASTES—MUSIC AND MARRIAGE

I BELIEVE we have a right to reckon two poets on my mother's side of our family tree, namely, Abraham and Hannah Cowley. I am the more inclined to think this is correct on account of some names in the Cowley family, two generations ago, having been more or less biblical or "Bunyany"; for instance, there was a "Christian" Cowley, which savours of the *Pilgrim's Progress*; then there was "Samuel," more than one "Hannah," and others that I am quite sure had a certain biblical smack about them, but which have escaped my memory. They were a decidedly handsome family, the Cowleys. The eldest girl, my Aunt Harriet, was a very sweet-looking woman, as I remember her, dressed in the costume worn by ladies of that or perhaps rather an earlier period, with which the old original illustrations to *Nicholas Nickleby* by Hablot K. Brown ("Phiz") have made all students of Dickens familiar. I remember her rather short skirts, showing the neatest possible ankles and such shapely feet in the daintiest of Cinderella-like shoes. Harriet (how rarely one comes across this name nowadays!) had been a great beauty. She married a Mr. Clement Wigney, whose appearance, with his well-arranged

rather iron-grey hair, his full whiskers, his dandified costume, and rather rakish style, is recalled to me by "Phiz's" pictures of Sir Mulberry Hawke. Of course my uncle, Clement Wigney, was a superior and gentlemanly variation of that Dickensian "rip," that is, as I recollect him. He was always a great favourite of mine, though I regarded him with awe, as one who seemed to belong to a world totally distinct from that inhabited by Mr. and Mrs. Cowley, in whose house he and my aunt resided *en permanence*, though he, having a large acquaintance and being probably a club man, or having a great many friends in club-land in those early days (of which territory I knew nothing), was away very frequently; but on most Thursdays, which was the day in every week consecrated by my father to dining at my grandfather's, and which was my "afternoon out" at the same house, I generally remember Clement Wigney sitting in his usual place at the dinner-table when I came in to bid the world good-night, and be taken off home by my nurse, who had been announced by Mr. Muzzle, the butler (isn't that a Pickwickian name?), as "having come to fetch Master Frank."

If it was at home that Master Frank first acquired a taste for Dickens by reading *Pickwick* when it was brought out in weekly numbers (at least I certainly remember it in this form), to be bound up in monthly parts, it was at Park Crescent that he cultivated it, as it was here that for the first time he saw the illustrated edition, over which the same little Master Frank would be literally doubled up with laughter, thereby causing the greatest merriment to his dear Aunt Clara, who had the pleasantest laugh in the world, and considerable astonishment to his grandmother, who would stop in the midst of her embroidery work to inquire "what on earth the boy was laughing at," and on being told, and the passage being read to her, she would enjoy it im-

mensely. Under Clara's supervision I became acquainted with all sorts of literature, through the medium of an entertaining scrap-book she had compiled; and as she was no mean artist in water-colours, I followed her lead, and having been presented with a superior "box of paints" I set to work on highly colouring most of the pictures in such illustrated books as were within my reach.

Whereas I daubed prints and read Dickens at Mrs. Cowley's, at my other grandmother's I read old plays in volumes bound up, entitled "The British Theatre," in which I found *The Hundred Pound Note* (and cried with laughing over the low comedy of *Billy Black*), *Pizarro*, *The Bronze Horse*, and many others, which have long since escaped my memory, and which I have never heard of as being revived on the stage. Fortunately the books that I read at home were my own, presented to me at various times by kind aunts and uncles; for, oddly enough, never can I remember my father giving me any books, nor have I any record of his having done so. My mother, who was Miss Emma Cowley, next after Harriet, must have been a considerable reader, chiefly of serious poetry, as I have some of her books, with notes and queries in her handwriting. But all my Cowley aunts were clever, all read a great deal, all were good amateur artists above the average, but none of them were musicians. Literature and painting were represented by the Cowley side, and drama and music by the Burnand side of the united forces represented by my mother and father. Both families appreciated humour; but the two were, however, far apart, and the members of each knew very little of one another. I have heard of a visit of ceremony, when one grandmother called on, or left cards on, the other grandmother. But they were miles asunder, and from Newington to Park Crescent was too great a distance for more than an annual visit. Never was little boy treated more kindly or tipped more handsomely,

and with greater regularity, than was the writer of these reminiscences. Of such kindnesses the memory lasts a lifetime, and the lesson of "go and do likewise" has not, I trust, been lost upon me. At the recurrence of every return to school I became a juvenile "collector," officially, so to speak, visiting my uncles, aunts, and my grandmother, though only the one in town could be favoured with a call (by me) *at* her house, and *on* her purse. With great prudence my father received and stored up any presents in money that were made to me on my birthdays by Mr. and Mrs. Cowley ; and as they had commenced when I was six, I received quite a nice little sum on my leaving Eton, when I was between sixteen and seventeen. I wonder what I did with it ?

Mrs. Cowley was the only one of that family that lived to a great age and retained her faculties up to the very last. To the latest hour of her life, as long as she could be in the drawing-room, she continued her embroidery, and by the aid of spectacles read the newspaper regularly every day. She was an excellent woman, most kind, unaffectedly religious and broad-minded, although she viewed with some disfavour the "Puseyites" (there were no "Ritualists" then) of her time, and would confide to me, with a smile of toleration, that my Aunt Harriet, who, on becoming a widow, lived in comparative seclusion (and indeed I rarely, if ever, set eyes on her after I was about eighteen years of age), had devoted herself to Church work of some sort, which required of her very little physical exercise beyond what was necessary to enable her to descend and ascend the staircase and step into and out of the carriage, of which, for the greater part of the day, she had the exclusive use, my grandmother taking her airing in it for an hour or so, and, as long as she could, walking to see her married sons and their families, who lived within a short distance of her residence in Montagu Square.

So they go out of this family history, with the exception

of my favourite, Aunt Clara, whom for some time after her marriage with Mr. George Bishop I never could forgive for marrying somebody else and not me, for I had always been preposterously in love with her, as she was so pretty, so sweet, so cheerful, and had such delightful curls, like David Copperfield's Dora, and had acted as quite a second mother to me, taking me out with her in the carriage for drives about London and in the Park, and always doing a great deal of shopping, which included sundry purchases at the toy-shop. None of the Cowleys were theatrical, nor do I remember them ever conversing about opera or drama ; as I have said, this portion of my education came from my father's side, and, with evidently a natural bent, I made, if not the most, at least as much as I could of it.

CHAPTER IV

MORE CLERGY—FATHER'S FRIENDS—ROUSE—
ROUGEMONT—BATH—SCHOOL—MASTER—
MISSESES—ILLNESS—SCENE—BRIGHTON—
DOMBEY—TOOTS—THE REV. MR. YOUNG—
READING THE LESSONS—ANCIENT FARCE—
AMATEUR BOYS—SIR MARTIN ARCHER
SHEE, *P.R.A.*—SCOTT'S NOVELS—HAMILTON
WOODGATE—LIGHT LITERATURE

AMONG my father's friends I remember only one clergyman. In manner and costume he did not in the least resemble a modern clergyman in 1901 of any one of the many divisions and subdivisions of the Anglican Church. I have already mentioned my grandmother's clerical friend, Mr. Gregory, as a type of the card-playing and "dancing parson," as common in London at that time as was the sporting parson of the "Jack Russell" order in the country. I should not remember Mr. Ludlow at all but by the fact of his having recommended to my father a school at Bath, kept by a friend of his, a Rev. Mr. Hutchins. So to Bath my father took me. He was, I think, accompanied by two friends; one was a very jovial young man, Mr. James Rouse, and the other a drily humorous one, a Mr. Henry Rougemont (this family also originally came from the Pays de Vaud, and, I think, has by this time inserted "de" before the Rouge-

mont), whom he treated as his guests, and who doubtless, with my father, highly enjoyed the pleasures of the gay city after having got rid of their charge, aged nine years old, by depositing him at Zion House, Zion Hill, in the care of the Hutchins family, to be left till called for, or sent for, at the end of the school time.

I pause to ask how did we travel to Bath, and in those days to Brighton ? I remember going, once, by coach to Brighton, but I cannot recall a second similar journey. I suppose we must have gone by train to Bath at that time, and have taken about four hours over the journey. But here again my memory is entirely at fault. However, there we went, and there I was, as unhappy as ever little boy of nine could be at what was in fact his first regular school, where there were boys up to fourteen at least, and none that I remember younger than this miserable little individual. Had I read *Nicholas Nickleby* at that time, or was it afterwards, when I had made the acquaintance of a beastly cane with waxed threads round it, wielded by Mr. Hutchins, that I associated him at once, then and for ever afterwards, with the brutal Mr. Squeers ? His son, fresh, very fresh, in manner and colour, from Cambridge, wearing light check trousers and a brilliant tie, also flourished a cane merrily and with considerable spirit, not so much for purposes of punishment as just for playfully touching up a boy now and then, as an expert coachman flicks a fly off a leader's ear. I feared them both ; hated lessons ; detested the boys ; and playtime was no relaxation.

The Misses Hutchins were most kind ; there was one, the eldest, a married one,

“ Whose Christian name was Sarah,”

as Albert Chevalier in his artistical impersonation of a typical “ Coster ” sings, and she kept her younger sisters, who were inclined to be a bit effusive, within the bounds of orderly

decorum. These ladies helped in smoothing the rugged schoolboy's life for me, especially during my convalescence, when practically I had retired from school business, and was only awaiting my father's orders to be conveyed home.

My illness! Shall I ever forget it! Never! It was my first histrionic attempt and my last in this particular line. I never encored it, and never wanted it to be encored.

I had "something the matter with me"—that is all I knew. What it was I haven't an idea, nor, strange to say, do I remember any medical man being called in by the Hutchinses. What portion of the drama preceded the great scene in the dormitory, where I was taken suddenly very ill, I do not in the least remember, but most distinctly do I call to mind how at night the dimly lit dormitory was suddenly illuminated by the entire Hutchins family bringing in candles, and how around the supposed dying boy's bed the tender-hearted family all knelt in prayerful expectation of every moment being my last. Most distinctly do I call to mind how at first I wondered what on earth they were all doing, until gradually I, as the chief performer in whom the interest was centred, entered thoroughly into the spirit of the thing, and, perhaps, recalling the life and death of the unfortunate Smike, mixed up, perhaps, with that of little Paul Dombey (who wanted to be informed what "the wild waves were saying"), I acted the part of "the dying boy" to the life, that is, to the very best of my limited ability, being at the time deeply touched by my own performance, and rather expecting to see angels hovering about my little bed, ready to bear me away, somewhere or other upwards, in their outstretched arms. The spectacle of the suffering boy must have been a sight calculated to touch the hardest heart of the most relentless schoolmaster. What on earth was the matter with me I do not know, and never have known to this day.

It was a subject to which I never cared to allude. But in a very few days I was convalescent. I was not allowed to return to the schoolroom,—thank Heaven!—but was cared for by the young ladies, who took the most affectionate interest in my progress towards perfect health. After a while I used to limp about the grounds. Why limp? Some one had told me that my heel was contracted. I accepted the statement as fact, and feeling deeply grateful to the brilliant person who had suggested the idea, I adopted it at once, and limped about the grounds with a stick.

Then my father appeared on the scene and took me up to London. It was settled that Bath did not agree with me. I might have acted the part of a regretful boy who was very sorry not to be able to return and resume his studies at Bath, probably I did; but the penalty for not returning to Bath had to be paid by me in full, and Bransby Cooper, a well-known surgeon, a great friend of my father's, inspected me, and then decided that I must be "cupped" and "blistered." I remember being rather proud of this decision as proving that, after all, there *was* something the matter with me. Happily for my peace of mind I had not the most vague idea of what an "operation" meant.

So cupped and blistered I was; and I remained in bed for weeks, I believe. The suffering caused by that blister, which I remember to this day, and ever shall, decided my next move, which was, that, on leaving that couch, *nothing should be the matter with my spine or leg*; that I would never again attempt such a highly successful performance as I had given, with quite an exceptional run, and would walk literally upright and straight, physically and morally, all the days of my life.

So I got quite well; walked masterfully, and but for an occasional weakness in the left leg (so perhaps it wasn't

all so entirely shamming as I thought it, and there was some foundation for the lame leg to go upon) have never had any trouble in that department from that time of life up to now.

A fresh-coloured dandified doctor, Mr. Harrison, of Brook Street, was the general practitioner consulted, and with Bransby Cooper (a very hard nut to crack was old Bransby) he gave his opinion that sea air was required for my physical and mental development, and that of all places Brighton was the one.

But at that time, 1846, Brighton was the only seaside place with anything like a fashionable reputation. Margate was popular, and Ramsgate was fairly fashionable in a middle-class away, *teste* Charles Dickens. So to Brighton my father took me; we stopped at the Albion Hotel, where he was evidently very well known and heartily welcomed.

Thalatta? Thalatta! I saw the sea for the first time! From that moment I loved it, and to this love, with enforcedly long intervals, I have been ever true. "My heart is true to the sea," but not to Brighton. After my school time was ended there, and after some subsequent holiday visits, I never cared to make any stay at Brighton, though on occasion I have remained there for a few nights.

So to school, kept by the Rev. Mr. Roberts in Sussex Square, Kemp Town,—M.A., I believe, of Trinity, Dublin, but this was *not* announced,—I was taken. With the exception of Mr. Roberts not being a bit like Dr. Blimber, that there was no parallel to Cornelia, and that there was nobody in the slightest degree resembling Mrs. Pipchin, Dr. Roberts' school was a counterpart of Dr. Blimber's. We had a "Toots," whose name was Thomas Harding, the son of a Manchester man, the eldest boy there, who affected bright colours, and was called "Pussy" by the senior usher, the only man who dared take such a liberty,

on account of Harding being much engaged in cultivating a very fine-drawn dusky line of moustache, on which, during school time, he used to keep watchful eyes by means of a looking-glass fixed inside the lid of his desk; and we had a "Traddles" with rebellious hair, always in trouble, the hair and its owner, though, by the way, Traddles belongs to *David Copperfield*, and so I must admit that Mr. Roberts' school was, to my mind, somewhat a medley of the two Dickensian schools, one in *Dombey* and the other in *David Copperfield*. We had Mr. Jakes Wamby (who could forget such a name?), the senior usher, directly out of *Dombey*, and in the second usher we had Mr. Patey, representing, flute and all, "Mr. Mell," straight from the pages of Dickens.

Mr. Wamby had large fox-coloured whiskers, a Roman nose (which was his strong point as a master of the classics), dressed gaily in a brown cut-away coat, rather sporting, with brass buttons, a light tie, and cheerful trousers; while, on the other hand, Mr. Patey's costume was mournful in tone, and his manner was as gentle as Mr. Wamby's was buoyant. Mr. Wamby was the one who alone seemed undismayed at table during breakfast, dinner, and tea by the presence of Mrs. Roberts, our headmaster's wife, while he assumed the most courtly air when taking snuff and addressing a quiet old lady with a swollen vein in the centre of her forehead, who was Lady Roberts, the mother of our headmaster, of an Irish Protestant family, and, as was her son, an enthusiastic "Evangelical." Not that any of us youngsters knew any difference between a Low, Broad, or High Churchman, and in those early years we never so much as heard the term. On Sundays we were marched two and two (quite Blimber over again this) to a church in Kemp Town, where one Mr. Venn Elliott used to preach; always in a black gown, and I only mention this now, as I suppose the Genevan gown and bands are seldom seen in the pulpit.

In those ancient Brighton days, too, the officiating clergy were in a three-decker, just as I had seen them in the Regent Street chapel-of-ease, when taken there of an afternoon by my father.

By the way, *à propos* of the "three-deckers," I may here mention that once, much later, and after I had left the Kemp Town school, I was staying with my cousins, the Henry Burnands, at Brighton, when on Sunday morning we were all trouped off to attend morning service at some church where a Reverend Mr. Young, the son of a well-known tragedian of the Kemble school, was announced as reading the lessons, while a great preacher, one Mr. Montgomery, was to deliver the sermon. I forget the sermon, but I shall never forget the Rev. Mr. Young's reading of the first lesson. It was most dramatic. Our attention (and none of us were particularly attentive) was riveted on him. He took in the whole congregation at a glance; he directed his eyes so that each particular person feeling himself, or herself, addressed, thenceforth became intensely interested. The lesson was about the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (I trust I have the names correct, but they are near enough, and will be easily recognised), and he made his "great hit" with the climax to which he led up most artistically. He looked about after a pause, and then impressively he declaimed, without further reference to the book, which would have detracted from the effect—

"The earth opened"—

We were all thunderstruck. Although we were familiar with the story, yet this tremendous "situation" had never before struck the audience, I mean the congregation, so terribly.

He paused again, the earth had opened; we saw the scene; we dared hardly anticipate the *dénouement*. He continued, as very slowly he lifted up the side of the book

with his right hand, "And (*pause*) the earth (*pause—then very slowly*) swallowed them up!" and here he perceptibly shuddered, closed his eyes as if to hide from his vision the dreadful spectacle, and then closed the book with a sharp snap (as if bottling up Korah and Co. for ever), and then the congregation breathed again as Mr. Young, having quite recovered from the effect of his own dramatic rendering, proceeded with the following portion of the morning service.

At Mr. Roberts' school, what I specially remember was making great friends with a boy somewhat older than myself named Hamilton Woodgate, who, not being as strong as most other boys, used to be excused cricket and the rough-and-tumble games, and would spend most of his time in reading the Waverley novels. Hamilton, I, and another, but his name escapes me, used to put all the forms together in the schoolroom at Brighton, and, during play hours, when the weather did not permit our games in the field (about a quarter of a mile from the house), we used to perform, on this improvised stage, our private version of *Box and Cox*, which had just then made a great hit in London, and which we had been taken to see during the holidays. How venerable is Maddison Morton's farce! Still to this day it enjoys a measure of popularity to which Arthur Sullivan and myself added a fresh impulse. But that is another story, and "we shall see it later."

The only person of any artistic distinction whom I can call to mind as being among my father's occasional visiting friends were the Shee family, of which the head was Sir Martin Archer Shee, President of the Royal Academy (1846), a patriarchal-looking and most amiable old gentleman, with a long white beard, and very white hair, upon whom I was taken to call at Brighton, and also in London, at Cavendish Square, where, I fancy, Sir Martin lived. My father was wont to amuse them with some nonsense Italian songs, to

which he played his own accompaniment of a few chords, and as I distinctly remember he imitated what evidently he considered to be an ecclesiastical kind of monotone chant, supposed to be sung by a priest when saying, or rather, singing mass, with an attendant boy as "server," only that he did not use the proper Latin, of which it is more than probable my father was totally ignorant. The exemplary cleric, a creation of my father's imagination, was represented by him as, during mass, addressing asides to "the little rascal" (an address of endearment which my father was very fond of using when speaking of me to a third party present), and ordering his *déjeuner à la fourchette*, with, of course, a bottle of wine to wash down various delicacies after he had finished officiating. On my learning afterwards that all the Shees were Catholics of an old Irish Catholic family, I could not but wonder at their so politely listening to, nay, applauding my father, and laughing heartily at his musical efforts. They liked him evidently very much, and he them; but why on earth he should have chosen as a subject for ridicule the most sacred rite of their religion is what has, since, frequently puzzled me, though at the time, being so young and totally inexperienced in Church matters, I did not in the least understand the *portée* of his improvisation. Nor, though I have never forgotten it and can picture him at the piano, the venerable Sir Martin, the amused audience, and the very old-fashioned room where it took place, was I ever at any time, and I heard it more than once, particularly amused by it. Very young as I was, it did not seem to me quite the proper subject for such handling, although, owing to the inherited Vaudois spirit I was brought up in the general idea that all priests were "humbugs," and if ever pope, cardinals, or any Roman ecclesiastics were mentioned in the course of conversation by my uncles and aunts (who had been educated in Protestant schools

abroad, and who in the slack time of business very often took a holiday tour on the Continent), it was always as being mere actors in a show, taking pleasure in gulling the people, and making out of it "a fat and happy living."

And, while on this subject, I may confidently affirm that never at any period within my recollection have I deliberately sneered at or tried to find a subject for ridicule in anyone's professed religion, no matter whether the persons themselves either did not act up to their profession or laughed at the tenets they ought to have revered. Seeing the absurd side of most things, I have never been able to scoff at what appear to many as ridiculous details which are mere accidents of any form of religion, although for Tartuffes, Stigginses, Achillis, and suchlike impostors, who make a hypocritical pretence of religion as a cloak for their immoralities, the severest ridicule, the most scathing satire, and punishment the most condign, is thoroughly well deserved. I make this note remembering how astonished I was that our worthy schoolmaster, rector of Paul's Cray, on his return from attending the opening of a new church at Chislehurst, should have been so startlingly bitter against the appearance of a number of his brother clergymen in their surplices, when he and a few others stuck to their black academical gown and bands. It was the first time I had been brought into anything like close contact, as it were, with "Puseyites" and "Puseyism," of which, if I knew anything at all, I had learnt it from the columns of "Mr. Punch," who, at that time, seemed to consider it a duty to go out of his way to denounce the High Church movement. Yet I very much doubt whether any one of his staff understood it, from Thackeray, who subsequently expressed his regret at his share in the attack that had caused Mr. Punch the loss of one of his most delightfully clever artists, Dicky Doyle, to Professor Leigh, who was, if any-

thing, a Swedenborgian, and obstinately illogical even at that. I have no sort of inclination to laugh at a Brahmin, a Mohammedan, a Hindoo, a Protestant of any denomination, on account of his creed. And, as for the Jew, directly I arrived at years of discretion I perceived very clearly that Fagin was not a representative Hebrew, and was glad to see that Dickens had made the *amende honorable* by drawing that charming picture of Mr. Riah, the long-suffering servant of "Fascination Fledgeby," the vulgar, scheming, mean, money-lending Christian.

I fancy, looking back at the uneventful schooldays at Brighton, that I was not sorry to hear that Mr. Roberts had accepted a small living at Paul's Cray, in Kent, where he would continue to take a few pupils in order to prepare them for the public schools. My father having determined that I was to go to Eton, and Mr. Woodgate having settled that his son Hamilton, my chum, was to go to Harrow, we were both included in the select few with whom Mr. Roberts decided to start in his rectory at Paul's Cray, Kent.

We boys were very happy at Paul's Cray: that I remember. Once upon a time, indeed, being sentimentally inclined, I and another fellow in the autumn season (I quite forget who was my companion in crime) determined to imitate some adventurous heroes of whom we had read, and to, not exactly "run away"—that was too much exertion—but to stray away from school and live a vagabondish life for some days, and then return. The idea was indefinite: it struck us, I should say, about midday, when we were in one of the woods wandering alone, and when we thought we could support ourselves on a diet of nuts. But the season was not sufficiently far advanced; the nuts were green and disappointing; and after half an hour of woodland life, we, beginning to feel the usual healthy midday void, decided on returning as quickly as

possible to the meal awaiting us at the rectory, where we arrived very hot, hungrier than ever, and quite unable to give any other reason for our unpunctuality beyond saying that we had lost our way. Had we lost our dinner "the punishment" would have "fitted the crime."

My great "chum," Hamilton Woodgate, shared a room with me—we two alone—and here at night, after the candles had been removed by a pretty light-haired buxom chambermaid (to whom all the twelve little boys made love at the same time, but who would listen to none of us, being engaged to the village carpenter), Hamilton used to tell me in a condensed form all the most popular of Scott's novels, which he had read until he knew them pretty well by heart, especially emphasising the plots that had been used for operatic or dramatic purposes, as, for example, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Guy Mannering*, and so forth. Excellent chap that he was, with a sweetly soft voice, a most wonderfully accurate memory, and a perfect talent for narration, unequalled by any one I ever heard of except Schezerade, who saved her head by telling the Sultan the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. Thanks to him I knew the main points, characters, and incidents of the Waverley Novels long before I settled down to read them! In return, I, having already been taken to the opera, was able to produce my own versions (always comic), illustrative of *Norma*, *Don Giovanni*, *William Tell*, *Puritani*, and such operas as I had seen. The idea of "stories from operas" was, I think, started in my mind by *Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare* in the first instance, while the notion of burlesquely illustrating them was, I am almost sure, but cannot be quite positive, suggested to me by seeing the pictorial series that used to appear in the very early days of *The Man in the Moon*, started by Angus Reach and others as a rival to *Punch*.

This reminds me that *Punch* I saw every week; my father always forwarded it to me when I was at school at Paul's Cray, and continued the supply regularly on my subsequently proceeding to Eton. So that in my leisure, quite apart from school work and from musical studies, I was, as it were, brought up on Walter Scott, Dickens, Ainsworth's novels, and those of G. P. R. James must not be omitted, *Punch*, and Mr. Punch's shortlived but temporarily brilliant rival, *The Man in the Moon*, on which periodical among the principal writers were Albert Smith and Shirley Brooks, afterwards so brilliant a contributor, and then editor, of *Punch*.

CHAPTER V

ON THE ROAD TO ETON—DURNFORD—JUDY—
HARDSHIPS—EARLY SCHOOL—PRÆPOSTORS
— LUBBOCKS — REFRESHMENTS AT JOE'S —
FAGGING — MISERIES — “SOCK - SHOPS” —
GAMES—“WET BOBS”—“DRY BOBS”—SENSE
OF HONOUR—BOATING—MUSIC—DRAWING—
TARVER—EVANS—THE PROVOST—BETHEL
— PLUMTRE — COOKESLEY — HAWTREY —
STRAWBERRY TIME—AT THE WALL—1851—
CRYSTAL PALACE — EVANS'S — IMITATIONS
AT ETON—CIDER CELLARS—MUSICAL FINISH

AND now we come to the first landing-stage of importance, when I am taken down by my father to be introduced to the Rev. Francis Durnford, then one of the upper school masters at Eton, a kindly, nervous man, with an irritable manner and so squeaky a voice that by universal Etonian consent he was nicknamed “Judy.”

Odd that “Judy” should have had the task of superintending the education of one who was afterwards to be admitted as one of the family gathered about the celebrated round table of “Mr. Punch.”

The recollection of that introduction is still fresh in my memory. I remember my father taking me down by the Great Western line to Slough, our being driven in a fly along the Slough Road, and thinking how very dreary

it all seemed, and then suddenly Eton, as it were, breaking out upon us all at once. I am convinced my father was as much impressed as I was with the scene ; but he regarded it relatively as mainly concerning me. He took it all in, as it were, and gave it me in bits. "Here," he said in a large way, "is where you will play" ; he was quite wrong as to the particular spot, and he of course had no notion as to the locality of the playing fields. "Here you will make a lot of friends who will be most useful to you in life." But he was wrong again, absolutely.

We descended at Mr. Durnford's, which was at that time the first of the taller houses on the right after leaving the Slough Road, and nearly facing the archway leading into the school yard, and I was introduced to "my tutor."

It was just before the end of the holidays—the summer holidays—and the boys had not yet returned ; so this was only a preliminary canter. "Judy" Durnford stood on one side of the fireplace in his study, with an elbow on the mantelpiece as he tousled his hair with his right hand, furtively regarding his knee, which was at an acute angle with the low fender, and fidgeting generally, while my father stood meekly and almost reverently opposite, explaining *me* as far as he understood anything about me, and hoping that all sorts of good might result from my becoming an Etonian under the auspices of the Rev. Francis Durnford, M.A.

My father did not stay to be shown over any part of the college that might have been open at the time, even if the offer were made, but we were shown over my tutor's house by himself and Mrs. Durnford, from whom, I suppose, my father obtained all information as to what I was expected to bring with me as necessaries of school-life. Personally I remember being deeply interested on my room being shown to me,

the little room that I was to have all to myself ! I had had one all to myself at home, it is true, but it was only a bedroom ; while this apartment was not only a bedroom, with folding-up bedstead, wash-stand capable of being easily and neatly concealed from public view, bureau with the lower portion given up to drawers for clothes, the middle to a most useful writing-desk, and the upper portion with doors to it and bookshelves complete, but it was also my sitting-room, my study, my breakfast-room, my play-room, my reading-room, my reception-room, and intended generally for any and every other purpose to which it could be legitimately put. Like the cobbler's stall which "served him for bedroom and kitchen and all" (I expect a pun was meant as regards this last word, which, pronounced the same as "awl," is so intimately connected with the cobbler's trade), it was also to be my kitchen ! With what delight I looked forward to the making of tea and toast, the boiling of eggs, and the general enjoyment of breakfast and tea at my own fireside ; probably with a friend or two to look in occasionally from the other rooms, just as I, on invitation, would be delighted to return their neighbourly civilities.

So it was with a light heart and with an exhilarating anticipation of independence that, returning with my father to London, I looked forward to the expiration of my holiday, which was to advance me a step higher in life and confer upon me "the freedom of Eton College."

And I had an acquaintance who proved himself a "friend at court," in the person of Salisbury Ewart, one of the very best of boys (he was nearly five years my senior, and on the eve of quitting Eton, and no longer a mere boy, but a youth of eighteen), who being on most intimate terms with my cousins, at whose house in Sussex Square I used to spend the greater part of my time, nobly placed his services at my father's disposal, and promised to look after me at Eton,

as he would be in the same house. This he did, and saved me a lot of fagging one way and another at the first start. For some little time after his departure Salisbury, coaching for the army, and myself were, during the holidays, for various home reasons, the closest possible chums, allowing for the disparity of age. He entered the army, served in the Crimea, and for the better part of a lifetime I entirely lost sight of him, when, about twenty-six years after I had left Eton, as I was passing through the Burlington Arcade a greyish-bearded, youthful-eyed soldier-like gentleman stared, stopped, and then exclaimed, "Why, it's Frank Burnand, isn't it?" "Salisbury Ewart?" was my answer and question all in one. And there and then our old boyhood's friendship was, I won't say renewed, but resuscitated in a second spring, and remained fresh as ever until the very last day of his life, which even at the time of our foregathering was not so very far off. This is a vast jump from fourteen years of age to forty; but when we met again, as far as the freshness of our feelings was concerned, we might have only been separated by a journey of a few weeks instead of by an interval of over a quarter of a century! *Magna est amicitia vera et prævalebit.*


I am almost positive that I went to Eton in February 1850, immediately after the Christmas holidays, as my first impressions of a public school career, and certainly my most lasting ones, are of hopeless discomforts, of getting up by the glimmer of a "tolly," i.e. a tallow candle, at six o'clock on dark, raw, cold winter's mornings, of dressing oneself most unsatisfactorily, and of turning out to cross the road and present oneself at one of the dingy schoolrooms opening on to the cloister in the college. Of course there were other "new fellows" as ignorant of Etonian localities, manners, and customs as myself, and we, *les misérables*, somehow or another, found out where we had to go and what we had to do. I say

"somehow," for I have utterly forgotten *how*. What a wretched lot we were ! half asleep, cold, empty, and uncertain of what Fate had in store for us within the next half-hour of school time. I felt like one of Squeers' collection at Dotheboys Hall. Our only comfort was that the master seemed as miserable as we were ; but, on consideration, there was not much consolation in this, as its effect upon him, whoever he was (I fancy it was Johnny Yonge), was only to make him testy and severe.

I have before me an account-book dated 1850, in a perfect state of preservation, and from the interior evidence which it affords me I gather that I did not acquire methodical habits of diary-keeping—of which this book is a proof—until I had been at Eton for a couple of school times,—we did not style them "terms,"—that is, for the Easter school time and the summer school time, and had returned to my tutor, the Rev. F. Durnford, at the expiration of the summer holidays—we did not style it "vacation"—in the second week of September. At that time, and it may be so now, the poor Fourth Form boy and Remove were (compulsorily) the first to return ; the Fifth Form boys arrived a couple of days later, and the Sixth, I fancy, a day or so after them. My patron, dear old Salisbury Ewart, to whose care I had been confided by my father, was in the Fifth Form and, I fancy, his "minor," which is Etonian for "younger brother," came with him by kind tutorial permission, as, it being his first half there as it was mine, he ought to have accompanied me and not his brother. However, there we were, and I fancy Salisbury, who was always a kindly, plucky, good-humoured boy, as afterwards he was a first-rate soldier and most lovable man, did his best for me ; and, after I had been there a fortnight or so, he made me his "fag" in the house, and licensed me to say "I was fagging for *him*" should any upper boy summon me to "fag" for him at "the fives courts,"

or "fag" me to do any odd job out of doors. This was about all he could do, and for the rest I had to "bear the ills I knew not of" as patiently as possible ; and this I am bound to say I did.

Oh those first days as an Etonian, at that time at least ! *A-t-on changé tout cela ?* Maybe. I certainly hope so, for of all the sad times in my life that ever I spent (always excepting my first night and day at my first school), those first few days at Eton were about the most melancholy. Nothing supported me under the inflictions except the remembrance that I was an Eton boy and ought to "behave as such," though I couldn't help remarking that the petty tyrants were also Eton boys, and were also "behaving as such," and would go on so behaving until the end of the chapter, or of the school time, or of their last school time, by which time I should be one of the "Dandy Fifth," and in, I hoped, a position to exercise my acquired rights of ordering, commanding, and of "whopping my own nigger," when said nigger showed any signs of insubordination, or merely for the pleasure of the thing, or as a reminder to the "fag" that even if the power of inflicting chastisement was temporarily in abeyance, yet it was still there.

Oh, but what misery the commencement of Eton life as a Lower Fourth boy ! At least in *my* time. Up at six a.m., "lazily, lazily, drowsily, drowsily," as the once popular refrain of some burlesque song had it ; hastily dressed, sparsely washed, and out into the winter morning fog that generally hangs about low-lying Eton. How the place can be so healthy as it is, is a wonder ! 

Then the poor little chap (myself), with a vague idea of his lesson, probably to construe a Greek fable, with a "*ὁ μῦθος δηλοῖ*" moral at the end of it (they don't do this sort of thing now, I suppose), or whatever

the task in hand might have been, would rush across to join the other little boys, all about his own size, and all shivering, who were gathered round an ancient door that was let into the wall of the cloister, suggesting the gloomy entrance into a gloomier prison. There we awaited the arrival of the master, who presently appeared in cap and gown, looking about as cold, uncomfortable, and as ill-tempered (especially about the nose) as the most grumbling and miserable among his unhappy class. Taking out his key, he unlocked the door, unless it had been previously unlocked by some attendant like old Finmore, Dr. Hawtrey's body-servant, whose whole appearance, as being dressed like a rather seedy cleric and having a rather scorbutic countenance, suggested that of an undertaker who had been enjoying himself on the previous night "not wisely but too well," and who had not had time to put himself to rights and "pull himself together," for, indeed, he was very much "apart" in the matter of short trousers and low shoes, as also were some of the masters, specially my tutor.

Then we all limped in, took our places on the forms, and were then one by one marked in by "the præpostor" (a hebdomadal office held by one of the boys, whose duty it was to note down on a slip of paper the absence of any one from the class, and to show up the delinquent's name to the master, and then, if I remember aright, after the master had signed it, to the headmaster), who, like one of the clever north country sheep-dogs, knew by sight each separate individual of the flock, no easy task at that dismally early hour, seeing that all were practically reduced to a dead level, especially in the dull morning, when, like "cats in the dark," all boys "are grey," and in a damp, foggy schoolroom lighted by guttering tallow candles in sconces (for I cannot remember any gas except in the street); and as we were

dressed all alike, with our white turn-down collars, our black ties, waistcoats, and jackets, there was nothing to distinguish one lower boy from another except his trousers, and of these only the continuations worn by the first row were visible. Then some were "called up" to construe, and some could, and some couldn't, and the latter got "pœnas" and sat down, sadly looking forward to a miserable "after twelve," which should have been devoted to play, but which must now be given up to "writing out a hundred lines" of something or other and "showing it up" at, or before, next school time; and then as time went on fidgety fingers would quietly pull out watches and furtively consult them, when just as Lubbock major, minor, or minimus (there were Lubbocks of all sorts and sizes about in my time), having been called upon by the master, had, in a very measured tone, with much fear and trembling for the result, commenced where the other boy, who had just sat down, had left off, the school-yard clock would strike the half-hour (oh blessed clock! oh joyous sound!), and, without paying any further attention to master or book, out we would all struggle, push, and scamper, running for dear life to the pastry-cooks, or "sock-shops," all open at that time, and there eagerly devour delicious hot coffee, hot buttered buns, and bread-and-butter, all in readiness for us! And never, never, *never* was there, or could there be, a meal so enjoyable, so excellent, so life-giving, so refreshing as this "coffee and hot-buttered bun" at "Joe's" and at "Webber's." "Joe's" was the nearest, and "Joe's" therefore most of us poor, chilly, half-awake starvelings patronised. And weren't we soon awake then? And couldn't we do a ham sandwich or two if the buns gave out? And wasn't Joe's niece or daughter, who assisted him, a pretty red-cheeked maiden, and didn't both of them, Joe and Miss Joe, attend to us in a wonderful manner, crowd-

ing his little bit of an unpretentious shop as we did, morning after morning, spending our fourpences, and feeling most grateful for every spoonful and every morsel we swallowed in those early mornings! Blessings on ye both wherever ye may be, Old Joe and Miss Joe, whose Christian name, alas! escapes me. Then we had to hurry off for another school time, a "saying lesson," at 7.30 I think it was; or did we get up at 6.30, in at school at 7, and out at 7.30, and then back to another school time at 8? I forget; but whatever the hours exactly were, they represented a wretched state of existence, until the good fairies, Joe and his niece (not to mention the elegant, dashing young ladies at Webber's just by Barnes Bridge, and knock-kneed, red-faced old Barnes himself, also with coffee and buns provided, —Barnes, "the friend in-knee'd" at this hour), came to our assistance and gave us to drink the *elixir vitæ* boiling hot, in fair-sized, not too large or quite large enough, coffee cups.

Then came the "saying lesson." I forget what it was: I don't wonder at this at all, as it isn't likely I should now, fifty odd years after, remember the saying lesson that I never could master *then*. I wonder if I ever knew a saying lesson? I doubt it. Not that my memory was ever poor; on the contrary. Give me a play as a boy and I would learn every part in it and say it off, scene by scene, without missing a word, and at the same time suiting the word to the action and the action to the word. But give me fifty lines of Homer, of Poetæ Græci, of Ovid (well, I found Ovid easier), of Horace, or of any other classic, whether "proser" or poet, and as I never could get up the slightest interest in any one of them, and was ready at any moment (had I been called upon to do so) to denounce and abjure the classic authors and all their works, I would have answered as my sponsors did for me at my baptism, and have said most heartily and emphatically

"I renounce them all!" And yet, coming to know something about them in much later life, and having myself once for a very brief period taught a pupil both Greek and Latin, I found a way to interest him as well as myself in Homer and Virgil, and what of the classics I taught that pupil he has never forgotten, while what was taught to me, or attempted to be taught to me, as an Etonian, by my "early masters" (at six o'clock and suchlike hours), has utterly passed away from my memory.

Gradually, of course, I fell into the Etonian ways. I had to go through the ordeal of hat-smashing, of kicking, of pinching from scores of tormentors, who asked the new boy, "What's your name?" and then not only ridiculed it whatever it was, but added injury to insult by kicking, hitting, or otherwise maltreating the person and the property (his hat generally) of the boy who had civilly answered an impertinent question. Boys with titles were treated in just the same way, which is a consoling reflection now, though it didn't matter a rap then; for what possible comfort could it be to a mere commoner to know that if he were kicked and whacked and had his top-hat skied half over the school-yard and made a football of to finish with—what consolation is there, I ask, for the miserable owner of that hat to know that the little Duke of Dumfoozle's or my small Lord Tom Noddy's hat is being treated in precisely the same manner, and that his little dukeship or lordship has had one whack on the back for "Tom," one on the chest for "Nod," and a final kick that took him off his legs just to emphasise the last syllable "dy"? Would such treatment of somebody else, be he lord or commoner, relieve my sufferings? for suffer I did, and suffer we "new boys" all did for the first few days. And if any Etonian of my time says he didn't suffer, then "if he does"—well, I apply to him the second line of the Bacchic chorus of "He's a jolly good fellow."

But then, when the new boy returned to his tutor's, had he not his own little room all to himself, his own books, his own bureau, his own easy-chair (if he had bought one), his own lamp, paper, pens, and ink, and his provisions all to himself, with plenty to share with some other new boy as wretched (out-of-doors) as himself? Truly, the Etonian's room at his tutor's was his castle. Here the wicked would cease from troubling, here the weary would be at rest—or ought to be—but was he? Not exactly. Could he sit down with his companion to a quiet little breakfast of their own providing and cooking *à deux*, until their masters had had their breakfast? Not a bit of it. There was no breakfast for the unfortunate Lower Fourth boy until he had prepared his master's tea or coffee, done his toast, buttered it, grilled his chicken, boiled his eggs, and fetched any luxuries that he might have been sent to purchase from Joe Grove's, or Webber's, or Barnes's. Perhaps he served at a large "mess" of elder boys, a mess of four maybe; perhaps they were rich boys, who went in heavily for every sort of breakfast variety; perhaps, too, they were boys with a taste for bullying and with the sort of sense of humour that sat so well on Mr. Squeers, so that when one of the shivering "fags" had allowed the toast to drop into the cinders his master would play a pretty game with him, consisting of making the little "fag," who was on the point of bursting into tears, spread out his fingers on the table while his master executed a sort of toasting-fork exercise, suggested, it may have been, by the Highland sword dance, performed by the master dabbling the toasting-fork quickly down between each of the outspread digits, but occasionally missing the table and prodding the fingers. Did the boy cry out he was whacked or bashed, or "the toasting-fork exercise for five fingers" was continued. His great chance of escape was to be a silent martyr, and to bear it with a grin. The first time how bitterly I wept as I

knelt before the fire like a Cinderella in jacket and trousers, blacking my hands, and alas ! burning the toast. This tyranny did not last long. I forget how the mess was dissolved, or how I became attached to another master. I think I fell to Salisbury Ewart's lot, or he got me transferred to his service, and then I was as happy as any slave who had escaped from Simon Legree, the cruel Yankee in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. And here I pause to say that when it became my turn in the course of events for me as a Fifth Form boy to "fag" I exercised my prerogative with the utmost mildness. My "fags" were uncommonly glad to "fag" for me, as I never had anything exceptionally good but what they had a share of it, and I never kept them waiting on me when they ought to have been getting their own breakfast. Mind, I am of opinion that well-regulated fagging has its advantages ; but it must be a system, and it must be well regulated. How to arrive at this without undue interference of masters, who ought to have nothing to do with anything that the boys can manage among themselves, I confess I don't see. What they do nowadays at Eton, whether they have "fags" or not, I am unaware. I daresay everything goes on much the same as it did "in my time." If it is no worse, I am glad ; if it is better, I am still more glad. Wholesome fagging is far better, physically and morally, than effeminate favouritism, which should be most severely dealt with and determinedly put down and stamped out by any master becoming cognisant of the fact.

In the winter, football at the wall, a game peculiar to Eton, was the only game of football I cared about. "Fives" was a great delight to me ; but to be "fagged" at fives, that is to be hailed by a Fifth Form boy and made to spend one's playhours "after twelve" in picking up a fives' ball, was one of the cruellest forms of Etonian tyranny. But the summer half was delicious. Directly one had "passed" the swimming

test (this was, and is still I hope, a most useful and sensible regulation), and could have a boat of one's own, built for you or hired for the whole school time, or by the week, then one indeed began to experience what "liberty" at Eton really meant. One sacrificed a little of one's liberty by entering "the boats," but, on the other hand, there was a gay costume to be worn (if you were very small and smart you would be dressed as a little admiral in the upper boats and as a middy in the lower), and there was an extension of liberty granted on certain festive occasions by one's tutor. I believe that, generally speaking, it is the fashion for Etonians to look back to their "Eton days" as the "happiest period of their life," just as it used to be for a bridegroom at the old-fashioned wedding breakfast to declare with violently suppressed emotion, amid the sobs of the company and the weeping of the bride, that that particular moment was "the happiest of his life," a very transparent fiction, unless weeping and wailing be outward, visible, and audible signs of inward contentment. And so of Eton. To be one's own master, with a room to oneself, and monarch within those four walls of all you may happen to survey, is glorious—as an idea. But as practically, if there were a call for "lower boy," you had, at the peril of your skin and of your freedom, to answer the summons at any time, no matter what you might be doing, no matter if it was work for "pupil room," or "mugging up" a (beastly) saying lesson, or writing home, or enjoying a book, and to go out and be "fagged" in any direction that your master or the fagger, being an Upper Fifth boy, might be pleased to send you, the *status* of being your own master was reduced to the very smallest proportions. Then, where was the liberty if, on crossing Barnes Bridge, you had to "shirk" (that is hide away from) every master you might see coming along the one narrow street of Eton? You were allowed to go on the river, but were not allowed to go down

the street to get there. All that nonsense, I believe, has been done away with. Probably some other nonsense has been substituted. Within the precincts of Windsor Castle was a place of refuge where masters and boys could meet and enjoy the music on Sundays, when the band played on the terrace ; but to be caught, by any master, in the act of going there, or when leaving, would mean a "pœna" at least, if not something worse. What trash ! The system simply taught "dodging" and deception. In every school there are stories of masters playing the "spy." Such stories there were at Eton, and some masters were considered uncommonly "dodgy." As "all is fair in love and war," so all hiding and dodging was considered as perfectly fair, and indeed as part of "the game as played" at Eton between boys and masters. If the hiding and dodging were simply part of the game, why so logically was lying. An Eton boy, put "on his honour," would tell the plain unvarnished truth, but so, I firmly believe, would most boys belonging to any other school.

I remember the case of a very mischievous boy, let us call him Smuggins (for he is now an eminent legislator, a magistrate, and country squire), who stayed on at Eton until he was in sixth form, and quitted the school "without a stain on his character"—in fact a quite typical Etonian of the very noblest sort—who, in conjunction with another, whom we will call Juggins (and to whom Smuggins was as Robert Macaire to Jacques Strop), played a practical joke which was fraught with serious consequences to the offender, or offenders, if caught. But during the inquiry Smuggins and Juggins lay low and said nothing, and the investigation resulted in an outsider, one Huggins, we will say, being pointed out as the culprit. Huggins of course denied it, but was considered in peril ; whereupon Juggins, conscience-struck, sought out Smuggins, stated the case, and ended

by asking, "Don't you think we ought to give ourselves up?"

"Why?" asked Smuggins stolidly.

"Well," replied Juggins, "if they accuse Huggins wrongfully, wouldn't it be only fair?"

"Not a bit," answered the bold Smuggins; "of course if Huggins were *proved* to have done it, and were going to be punished for it, then we ought to step forward and own up. But they haven't proved it against him, have they?"

"No," Juggins admitted; "they haven't."

"Well, then," went on Smuggins conclusively, "wait till they do. But they can't."

"Can't!" echoed Juggins, astonished.

"Why, you idiot!" exclaimed Smuggins; "don't you see? how on earth can they prove that *he* did it, when *we* did it?"

This reasoning was so conclusive that it settled the matter. The guilt could not, of course, be brought home to Huggins, and though some boys suspected the truth, yet no one uttered his suspicions; so, as Juggins didn't turn King's evidence against his companion in crime, and as Smuggins kept his own counsel, nothing more was heard of the matter until it became the common property of everyone as "a good story." To my mind it is an example of the most elementary casuistry, but not by any means an illustration of Etonian uprightness, honesty, and love of truth, of which qualities, as proverbial, I have heard a great deal; but I cannot remember ever having met with such nobility of soul among the Eton boys of my own time as is credited to them by Eton tradition. The moral teaching of all public schools is summed up in the formula, "Never tell a lie when the truth will do as well."

I have an abiding sentiment for the great school, or rather college, sacred to the memory of "Henry's holy shade"; but much indebted to it for anything in par-

ticular I most decidedly am not. For classics? Well, in the ordinary routine way, perhaps even less than I should have been indebted to the teaching at any other school. Owing to the absurd system pursued, I acquired the habit by constant practice of getting up a lesson in some classic author, Greek or Latin, in a remarkably short space of time, in a way that for the nonce satisfied "my tutor." The plan was for some boy possessed of a "crib" (a pretty literal "word for word" translation) to construe aloud, while half a dozen others followed him as best they could, while scribbling down the meanings of words in the margin of their books. Some of these books, "annotated," are still on my shelves, and bear testimony to the diligence with which I took down the English meanings of Latin or Greek words. Sometimes we dived into Greek Dilectus for "derivations," anticipating the master's likeliest questions. But it was all slovenly, and only a very few of the boys with whom I came in contact ever legitimately and thoroughly studied their lessons in a scholarlike manner. As we began, so we went on. The story of one school time is the history of all. As to games, in winter, speaking for myself, I detested football in the field, but liked the game "at the wall." Directly I had mastered "fives," I was very fond of it, and have always been so. Cricket I never played in my life after leaving Roberts's school at Brighton; it amused me to look at it; as a public school game it interested me as a partisan. But what I did take to was boating. I did not hold with racing, but with a pleasant row, sometimes in a "funny" with another fellow, and no steerer; sometimes in my own "tub," a "lock-up," when I generally joined a few friends in the heat of summer "after twelve" or "after four," who were willing to share in "sherry-cobbler," iced and enjoyed through straws, or other "lush" (that was then the slang

word for drinks), brought us to from "The Christopher" (the large old inn at Eton), and pipes of "shag" (shag, if you please, not "bird's eye") purchased at "Kitty Fraser's," which, as the only tobacconist's shop between the college and the river, enjoyed all the patronage that Eton boys could bestow. In such quiet nooks as were provided by "back water" and other similar deflections from the main stream, we smoked and read novels, studied *Bell's Life*, principally for the fights, and occasionally a boy who plumed himself on being uncommonly "fast" and quite "a man about town," would show us some very questionable kind of "literature," which, I am glad to remember, was very soon honestly denounced by the majority as "beastly," and was torn up and chucked into the river. I suppose the habits and manners of the majority of boys, in any large school where they enjoy such liberty as we did at Eton, are much the same everywhere. The "saps" will always be "saps"; the "*pious Æneas*" will always be religious; the sneak will be the sneak, and so forth, and so forth. What personal influence any individual master at Eton in my time exercised over his pupils I never discovered. Certainly my first tutor, "Judy" Durnford, exercised none, as unless he came round the house and paid us a surprise domiciliary visit in our rooms, I rarely came across him out of the house, except when I saw him hurrying into school. Eton was, and I suppose still is, an expensive affair; the parents paying willingly for the benefit they hope will accrue to their sons from mixing with those whom they are pretty sure to meet in the course of their subsequent career, or with whom they hope they *will* meet, and who will be of some use to them in whatever may be the station of life to which they are called. A "fond delusion" of the parents, except as to those sons who enter diplomacy, get places in Government offices, obtain commissions in

the Guards and in the army, are called to the Bar, take orders in the Church of England, or whose position by hereditary rank is at once fixed for them on their first entrance into life. A "public" school is a misnomer when applied nowadays to Eton, as including oppidans and collegers, because as far as oppidans are concerned it means that the school is open only to the sons of those who can afford to pay two hundred and fifty pounds a year for the privilege of being an Etonian. The "college" is another matter; that is the original Eton, and though shorn of many of its ancient privileges, is still "the foundation" on which the oppidan superstructure is built.

True, that you'll find Etonians pretty well everywhere, because the numbers are larger at Eton than at Harrow, Winchester, or Rugby, or at least they used to be so; and so it happens that to have been an Etonian becomes a sort of freemasonry, and may, like being a member of the "free and accepted" brotherhood, be of some use in the journey through life.

I continued to learn the piano here, being instructed by an absurd-looking chorister named Mitchell, with a rather pear-shaped head, black oily hair, and carefully curled whiskers. He had dumpy fingers, a heavy hand, and however skilled he may have been as an organist, which, when not singing in choir, was, I believe, his line, he was as much fitted to teach the piano as he was to give lessons in tight-rope dancing. However, I studied on, and as Robert Sutton, a boy just in sixth form, had a piano in his room, and as subsequently another, I think Vernon (Hon. William Venables Vernon, if I am not mistaken), also considerably my senior, had one in his, I was allowed now and then to listen to other older boys (who *could* play) perform, and was permitted to try my hand occasionally.

The piano was the only "extra" I learnt at Eton.

Others had such "extras" as French at Tarver's; mathematics (which were not in the regular *curriculum*), as taught by Stephen Hawtrey, or "Stephanos," as the eccentric Rev. Gifford Cookesley, one of the Fifth Form masters, used to nickname him; and drawing, as taught by Mr. Evans, who had a house then, and, as he was not a tutor, was called "a dame." The boys who were supposed to benefit by this out-of-school instruction used to have tickets signed by their tutor on going out to "Evans's" or "Tarver's," and signed by Evans or Tarver on their leaving. This led to a fair amount of dodging, altering figures, and so forth; whether the boys ever went as far as to commit forgery I don't know, as personally I had nothing whatever to do with them, and only knew the facts from what the boys themselves let out; but I fancy that Etonian "honour among thieves" would not have stood in the way of falsifying a signature or altering a time.

When I first went to Eton, the governing body, namely, the provost and fellows, consisted of four clerical magnates, who were as comic a set to look at as ever were imagined by Gilray, Phiz, or Cruikshank. Hodgson—Rev. Francis Hodgson, I think, was his name in full—was provost, a heavy looking round ball of a man, who waddled along as if taking no interest in anything in particular, and whose part in the communion service, when it fell to his lot to share it with one of "the other fellows," was so indistinctly mumbled that he might as well have been under a feather bed. In fact, a more grotesque performance than the communion service at that time at Eton it has never again been my lot to meet with, and, need I say, that the "imitations" of its performance by the provost and fellows as given by the boys were not intended to represent sentiments of the "sincerest flattery." The provost puffed and blew as he waddled up the chapel. Little Plumtre,

a "roving" one, with one eye (vice-provost, I think) that was always on the alert, looking out in a direction totally at variance with his other eye, his white hair sticking up on end like the crest of a cockatoo whose temper has quite recently been ruffled, walked from his stall to the east end of the chapel with a sprightly limp, and standing at the south end of the table while the provost was to the north of it, joined with his superior in a sort of duet, coming in with very high jerky notes and ending the sentence, whatever it was, quite inaudibly. "Bethel the Bursar," who had all the appearance of a good old high-tory, port-winy clergyman, roared like a bull of Bashan, as, by the way, he was not infelicitously described by my second tutor, the Rev. Gifford Cookesley, whose opinion of the entire lot of his superiors and *confrères*, not a very high one, was freely expressed, in and out of season, to his pupils. Then there was Dr. Hawtrey himself, whose dainty lisping mannerism was easily imitated, and whose voice, when he had to take part in the service, was to that of Big Bethel the Bursar as might be the notes of a reed-pipe to those of a bassoon.

One thing I clearly remember, and that was that in chapel during the "summer half" many of the smaller boys appeared in white trousers, *i.e.* "ducks." These little chaps sat in the front seats (as, I believe, other little chaps do to this day, perhaps also occasionally in "white ducks"—but that depends on fashion) on either side of the gangway, and with no desk in front of them, so that whereas only the upper part of all the others could be seen, the entire form of these rather small "fourth formers" was visible. Behind them was a row of "fifth formers," and among them a waggish Theodore-Hookish sort of boy, who, of malice prepense, had come into chapel with a lusciously ripe strawberry or two provided for the special

purpose of being placed on the bench in front, so that when some little chap in brighter white ducks than the others, and exhibiting signs of excessive dandyism in his general attire, should, while the second lesson was being read, have to sit down, he would inevitably come "squash" upon the strawberry "yielding under pressure." Difficult was it for his seniors seated just behind him to refrain from a guffaw, when they, being accidentally confederates in the plot, saw the boy start up as suddenly as he had sat down and re-seat himself with a puzzled expression, not daring to make any further movement lest general and too particular attention should be attracted to him. And when we all had to kneel, and the boys in the front rows had to turn round in order to do so, they alone of all in the chapel were exposed to remarks made at their expense and literally "behind their backs." Of course, the unfortunate boy, who, like Mr. Cox in the farce, had a "strawberry mark," only it wasn't "on his left arm," was the cause of much tittering, and if by chance the "blot on the scutcheon" was perceived by one of the authorities in the stalls above, the sanctity of the place (I mean, of course, the chapel) precluded immediate inquiry, and to proceed with it afterwards would have been a matter of considerable difficulty.

A propos of chapel, we kept "eves" of saints' days, with afternoon choral service instead of three o'clock school, and also saints' days which were whole holidays, with morning and afternoon choral service, which latter was fairly popular when the anthem was a favourite one, like "The Shield, the Sword, and the Battle." Psalms with good swinging tunes we liked the best, and the "go" of the psalm that has the recurring refrain of "For His mercy endureth for ever," was an effect that once heard would not be easily forgotten.

"What's the anthem to-day?" we would ask of one of the choristers, noted for his lack of aspirates.

"To-day? eh?" he would reply. "Why, it's 'Oly, 'Oly, 'Andel-'Allelooia-Chorus."

Of course, it was only when this anthem was on the list that we put the question.

So much has been written about Eton of that day, as, for example, of "Spankie le Marchant," one of the piemen at the wall; of "Bryan," with his hand-cart full of tarts, buns, etc., in the winter, and dispensing ices and little glasses containing jam and milk in the summer; and of the other "cads"—the football and boating cads, the cads with dogs, some of them, the cads, not the dogs being such scoundrels as ought not to have been allowed to hold any communication with boys of any age; there was one "Polly," an utterly helpless gipsy-looking loafer, whose character certainly would not have borne investigation,—I say these characters have been so frequently described that to do more than mention them here is quite unnecessary.

"Spankie" was the best of the lot, a fat-faced, short-neck'd, oily-mannered old humbug, whose salutation invariably was, "Well, my little (whatever the boy's name was), and *what* can I do, sir, for *you* this morning, sir?"

Once I remember as I was going into school seeing a very small boy wearing a very large hat purchasing a cake of Spankie. A big boy, in passing, gaily smashed this little fellow's hat right over his eyes, just as he was busily engaged in munching Spankie's cake, and went his way rejoicing. Spankie put the small boy's hat right for him, and the little bit of a fellow was evidently very grateful for the attention. He had dropped his cake into the mud. Spankie saw his opportunity, and without making any remark on the rude

action of the bigger boy, who was now out of sight, he addressed himself to the sufferer thus—

“And now, your little Grace, what can I do for *you*, your little Grace?”

His little Grace laid out a penny or two and went off happily, with a perfectly “shocking bad hat.”

“Who is that, Spankie?” I asked.

“That,” answered Spankie, with a comfortable smile and in his oiliest manner, “that, my little Burnand, sir, is his little Grace the Duke of St. Albans, who came up at the beginning of this half—his little Grace the Duke of St. Albans, sir; yes, sir, and what can I do for you, my little Burnand, sir?”

“You know everybody, Spankie,” I observed.

“Yes, my little Burnand, sir, I do, sir,” he replied, smiling sweetly; “your father Francis Burnand of Cornhill is in the City, sir, and your uncles too, sir, and—ah, my little Lubbock minimus, what for *you* this morning, my little minimus?”

It was a tradition with us that Spankie (surname “Le Marchant,” how entitled to it I don’t know) was a spy and informer in the pay of the masters. Certainly if you wanted correct information about anybody or anything in Eton, Spankie was *the* person to afford the information.

My first summer school time ended most satisfactorily (1850), and I attended my first “Eton and Harrow” cricket match in company with a “lot of nice new friends” from Eton, who were spending three or four days in town. The cricket matches, Eton *v.* Harrow and Eton *v.* Winchester, occupied quite that time, that is as far as days went; but in the evenings after the stumps were drawn, there were other games on that offered attractions more powerful than the public school matches. So while their parents and guardians in the country were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the dear boys, the dear boys themselves were “doing London,”

and, as the phrase nowadays has it, "painting the town red," that is as red as precocious boys of from fourteen to over sixteen could paint it. Boys of seventeen and eighteen were past-masters at this sort of thing, and at nineteen they were on their way to the university. I must not forget that not a few of us living in town had already enjoyed a taste of the Tom-and-Jerry-ness of London life during the time of the annual University Boat Race at Easter. Of course through my friend Jemmy Rouse, my elder Cousin Bransby, and through my father's kindly taking me about to almost all the sights, shows, and places of *al fresco* entertainment, and through my acquaintance with the Albert Smithian up-to-date and "about-town" literature of that period, I personally knew rather more of the "fastnesses" of London than did most boys of my age. We will, however, not dwell upon this first holiday time (which was a kind of preface to subsequent holidays), and skipping over 1850, during which time I was making acquaintance with all sorts of light literature (as I gather from the titles of the books and magazines that occur in copies of bills paid to my bookseller, Dolman of Bond Street, long ago disappeared), and passing over memoranda of certain extravaganzas I had written and submitted to the sister of my schoolboy friend Hamilton Woodgate, his senior and mine, who had thrown herself heart and soul into our theatricals at Swaylands, Penshurst, I come to the Exhibition year of 1851, when my father, having given up his rooms in New Bond Street, had permanently settled in Sussex Place, Hyde Park.

When I was fifteen, that is in 1851, the Crystal Palace, as all the world knows, was opened in Hyde Park by the Queen and Prince Albert, the youthful royal family assisting. Well do I remember the gradual growth of what was intended to be the Palace of Concord, the harbinger of universal peace and goodwill. As a matter of fact it marked the close of

many peaceful years, and when the drop-scene which had descended upon this brilliant act was again raised, it was to the strains of martial music trumpeting forth the commencement of the Crimean War. Our weapons had rusted, our tactics were ancient, our commissariat system was hopelessly out of gear. But our British pluck carried us through ; and, as at fifteen I was no student of the daily papers, all that could be learnt of the progress of the war, of the sufferings of our troops, and of the strong popular indignation felt and expressed throughout the length and breadth of the land, I as a boy gathered solely and only from *Punch*, with which my father, keeping up the excellent custom he had commenced when I was at school at Paul's Cray, supplied me regularly week by week. I remember, to hark back to the Palace of Crystal, how annoyed I was by the process of its construction, which I concluded would for a long time exclude me from Rotten Row, where I, on a hired pony, was accustomed to disport myself, accompanying my father in his afternoon's ride. At that time the Row was simply a straight line of ride extending from opposite Apsley House to the last gate of the Park, Kensington S.W. side, without any intervening gates. In the summer months a military band used to play in Kensington Gardens just on the border of the *fosse* outside of which Rotten Row was continued, and here the equestrians used to draw up their horses and listen to the performance of all the most popular airs of the day, chiefly operatic as far as I remember. In fact the gathering mainly represented the occupants of the opera stalls on horseback. I fancy the process of building the Palace caused very little inconvenience to the frequenters of the Row ; but as I was at Eton for the greater part of the year, I only took such a passing interest in the proceedings as the holidays permitted, and I have no recollection of being present at the opening of the Exhibition in May 1851, though the Palace of Glass itself I can easily

recall, seeing that it has been perpetuated at Sydenham, and is still with us as a memorial of the mother of all universal exhibitions, and as a tribute to the genius of Paxton.

Being, at the age of fifteen, as I have before had occasion to mention, a precocious patron of Evans's, the Cider Cellars, the Coal Hole, for several nights during the holidays, especially the midsummer holidays, I remember distinctly the opening verse of a song, to the tune of "The King of the Cannibal Islands," about the

"Glorious roarious first of May,
When our good Queen Vic-to-ri-a
Opened the Palace of Crystal!"

sung by one Sharpe, who at Evans's had a considerable vogue. He did not sing *his* songs until the midnight hour had struck, when all the white-faced little choristers who, with the big choristers, had been delighting everyone with excellently sung old-fashioned glees and compositions of the very first quality, were marched off to bed. This was an excellent rule, to which the boys in the audience ought not to have been an exception. When these serious singers had withdrawn, and only the tenor, Mr. Stuart, was left with, I think, a baritone singer, and a Mr. Brady in "the chair," then came on the stage the "comic singer," with his "tooral looral" *refrain* and other equally idiotic words which were then in fashion in all light-hearted-and-headed compositions of this class, and had one great advantage over the words themselves of the verses, inasmuch as they were absolutely nonsensical, and could have no meaning whatever unless it were implied by a wink, a leer, a nod, or grimace on the part of the too broadly-comic vocalist. Not that there was in those days, or in those nights, much reticence practised in singing about any subject, no matter what it might be: a spade was not only called a spade but something more, emphasised by an

adjective, and what nowadays would be suppressed in a police report was given in full amid laughter and applause, by these comic singers in their so-called "comic songs." They were not printed, published, and sold at the doors, nor could you obtain them at the musicsellers, but they were written out by the comic singer himself, and copies sold to anyone who could command ready money from two-and-sixpence up to five shillings apiece. At my tutor's (that is at Cookesley's, when I was between fifteen and sixteen) we used to hold a "sing-song" in imitation of "Evans's," or of "the Cider Cellars"; and as I possessed a piano, and played it sufficiently well for our indulgent audience, with burnt cork and paints we "made up" our faces, and with any old clothes "faked up" costumes, and so contrived to give a very enjoyable, if not highly intellectual, entertainment. My part in this, I remember, was the imitation of one Ross, a comic singer, with more tragedy in him than comedy, who sang a horrid nightmarish song, entitled "Sam Hall."

I had heard of this song from my elders at the opera, and I was determined to hear it sung by Ross. I had heard Sir George Armytage at the opera describe how Thackeray had been delighted with it, and how everyone considered Ross "an artist," and, indeed, that if the song was so repulsive as to make the hearer shudder, yet was it, as acted and sung, "a great moral lesson." By the way, *à propos* of Thackeray and the Cider Cellars, I fancy that the "Cave of Harmony" in *The Newcomes* was intended for Evans's, as it was in its very earliest days when songs were volunteered by *habitués*; but this was long before my introduction to that "Harmonious Hole."

So one night after I had been at the Covent Garden Opera with my father and one of my cousins, we two boys kindly released him from further attendance on us, and promising of course (I was a "very promising" boy at this period) to go

straight home, we took our way *viâ* Maiden Lane (I quite forget how we had ascertained the *route*), and put in at the Cider Cellars. It must have been our first visit (I am quite certain it was my cousin's first at all events), at least I fancy it was, but I was acquainted with the place from having read about the peculiar entertainment there given in Albert Smith's *Man in the Moon*, *The Gent*, and, as I think, in *The Adventures of Mr. Ledbury*; also I had heard the place talked about in connection with the "C.C.C.," or "Cider Cellar Club," where, as I had gathered, the actors, the "wits," the men about town were wont to foregather o' nights, and whence they did not issue forth until long past "the chimes at midnight" had sounded. Theatres and opera house finished, as a rule, at eleven, although "the early closing movement" was a long way off. I piloted my cousin safely to the door in Maiden Lane, over which was a dingy lamp on which the words "Cider Cellars" stood out in large black letters. We crossed the threshold, our boldness oozing out like Bob Acres' courage. Exploring, I looked straight before me, then right and left, and finally perceived a mysterious green baize door with an oval window of frosted glass, on which was inscribed "C.C.C." Here then was the room where literary and theatrical celebrities were assembled. Cautiously I pushed the door open and stepped in. A room, nothing more, with tables and benches: not a soul present! Seeing that this would not be a lively place wherein to pass a happy evening, we descended, myself leading, a narrow staircase, at the foot of which on the left-hand side was a small open "bar," whereat served a tall elderly man, whose name was, I afterwards learnt, Brumfit, the proprietor or landlord of the establishment, assisted by a good-looking, quiet-mannered, business-like barmaid, with raven black hair and a rather sallow complexion, whom everyone of the inner circle, that is who had the *entrée* to the "C.C.C.," addressed as "Harriet." Whether

Mr. Brumfit and this barmaid were surprised at the apparition of two boys within these sacred precincts, or whether they thought we had come there by invitation, I do not know; all I remember is that we coolly walked into the private supper-room communicating with the bar, where were seated several gentlemen, mostly in evening dress, some taking a light supper, some smoking, all with good-sized tumblers of various "grog" before them, all evidently enjoying themselves thoroughly. Naturally enough some of them stared hard at us, but our entrance did not interfere with the conversation, and having diffidently taken our seats in a corner, I summoned up sufficient courage to tell "Louisa," a nice-looking assistant barmaid, that we would take some poached eggs and draught "bitter in a tankard." Personally I was awestruck, for Thackeray was present! also Sir Charles Ibbetson, Andrew Arcedeckne, and Lord Exmouth (I learnt their names some years afterwards), with two or three others, whose faces were familiar to me as occupants of stalls near my father's at the opera.

Scarcely had our supper been placed before us, when a waiter rushed downstairs shouting excitedly, "Sam 'All, gentlemen." Whereupon down went knives and forks, glasses were drained, or left on the table to await their owner's return, and out everybody rushed, Thackeray leading. We hurriedly ascended the narrow staircase opposite to that by which we had entered, and following as best we might, pushed past the *habitués* of the C.C.C. who remained standing by the entrance, to find ourselves in the real "Cider Cellars," that is in a large room, crammed full of persons drinking, eating, and smoking, the atmosphere being thick with tobacco smoke, through which we made our way to two chairs, whence, having politely requested the waiter to fetch the supper we had left behind us, we regarded the dais at the end, elevated some four or five feet from the floor, on which was a dirty, weary-

looking man playing a grand piano, a vacant chair for the use of the performer when he should appear, and a screen, behind which the aforesaid performer, Ross, was at that moment "making up" for his great impersonation of "The Condemned Chimney Sweep," who it had been supposed was spending his last night on earth in singing this fearful song. I have heard Thackeray and others praise the marvellous acting of this man singing this dirge. It so deeply impressed me I know, that I have never forgotten it, and never shall. That we joined in the applause was to be expected; but that I should be, after a little while, back at Eton giving in my own rooms what I considered a perfect imitation of Ross in this character, may be taken as a proof that my appreciation of it as a work of art had quite banished any scruples I may have entertained. As to the character of the song, I heard it several times, and so knew the words perfectly. Certainly, between fifteen and sixteen, some of us were somewhat "advanced," and we obtained considerable encouragement from those who were our seniors by two or three years. The songs sung at festive gatherings at "The Christopher" and elsewhere were but repetitions of those that had been picked up in MS. for the "ridiculously small sum" of two-and-sixpence apiece. All this convivial licence was but some of the leavings of the Tony Lumpkin age; and at the time I speak of the "Cider Cellars" in Maiden Lane and the "Coal Hole" in the Strand, while affording "entertainment to man and beast," allowed that for "the beast" to preponderate.

At Evans's it was somewhat different. Its master, Paddy Green, who succeeded D'Arcy Evans (*vidi tantum*, when once revisiting his old haunts, on which occasion Paddy Green, as chairman, rose and proposed his health, which we all drank with enthusiasm), kept everything up to highly respectable "concert pitch" till twelve had struck, and then it was more "pitch" than concert, and such pitch

as could not be touched without some nastiness clinging to you for a long time. Everybody liked Paddy Green : he was " dear old Paddy " to all, and indeed he was in his way a remarkable man. He had carried a hod ; had assisted at the building of Her Majesty's Theatre ; had worked at his trade in Dublin and in London ; had been heard to sing among his mates ; had taken a dislike to being " hod man out " ; and had been accepted as one of the chorus at the opera ; not only that, but he came out strong at the Catholic chapel in Warwick Street, where Paul Bedford (before he went on the stage), M. Begrez (teacher of music and accompanist to opera singers), and several other musical celebrities were already employed, with an orchestra to accompany them, in singing at the High Mass on Sundays. The orchestra here was open to anyone who, being considered a fit and proper person by the conductor, cared to attend, rehearse, and make one of the regular musicians. Here my Uncle Theophilus, a proficient on the violoncello, used, as he has frequently informed me, to obtain some of his best practice, and through this became acquainted with such classical and also sacred music as he would not have learnt elsewhere. Two or three of his musical companions joined him in this, which I rather fancy must have been the start of those "*quartette*" evenings *chez lui* which are among my very earliest recollections.

CHAPTER VI

ETON—CHANGE OF SCENE—DURNFORD'S TO
COOKESLEY'S—DISCIPLINE—TUTORIAL
VISITS—SMOKING—MONSIEUR MALET—
YOUTHFUL AUTHOR—TWO DISTINGUISHED
CHARACTERS—AJAX—*VOX CLAMANTIS*—
EXPLANATION

EXCEPT that in my second year at Eton I was summoned back from home on the very first afternoon of the first day of the summer holidays, to receive a healthy swishing at the hand of the headmaster for the crime of having anticipated the holidays by some hours, and "taken French leave" with another and more hardened sinner than myself, the school times passed away much as all Eton school times pass away with those who have no other interest in Etonian life than to get the most amusement out of it that is consistent with keeping up a respectable appearance before your *confrères*, and a fair reputation for average work and conduct at your tutor's and with your masters. To arrive at that haven of rest where you can neither fag nor be fagged is a great point, and this was by me duly achieved. Thence I went to the Upper Lower Fifth, and at this point I fortunately escaped being "turned down," with which punishment I had been threatened, because, by merest luck, headmaster and tutor had hurried away for their holidays and had forgotten all about me and my

escapade (of "French leave"), as above mentioned. So I was forgiven because forgotten. On my return I had the ill-luck to get into another slight difficulty of a temporary character, which my tutor, "Judy," felt he could not possibly overlook. I quite forgave him, and indeed was not displeased with his decision. My father would have been (very naturally, as not being an Etonian himself) much distressed by my tutor's refusal to allow me to remain in his house, had I not, at the instigation of a youthful companion, suggested that at Eton there were more masters than one, not to mention "Dame's houses"; and that there was an opening for a likely lad in the house of one of the seniors, who was acknowledged to be one of the very cleverest of all the Eton masters, the Rev. Gifford Cookesley to wit. To him therefore, after a short stay at home of a couple of weeks or so, I was brought, my father having already interviewed him on the subject, and the Rev. Gifford having laughed at the Rev. Durnford's plain reasons and expressed his entire willingness to take me in among his pupils. I had already several friends at Cookesley's, and I soon had several more, among whom I may count the Rev. Gifford Cookesley, my tutor, as one of the best, and so he remained long after we had both of us, master and pupil, left Eton for good. Until I went to "Cookesley" I had been a mere tyro in the ways and means of enjoying life at Eton. Our tutor, beloved by all of us, was undoubtedly a first-rate scholar, a very well read man all round, but as eccentric as he was clever, brimful of humour, rollicking in his fun, but bitter satirical in his remarks about nearly all other dignitaries, from the provost downwards. In school business he was generally at loggerheads with the authorities; and differing from the majority of them in politics, he, with perhaps two other "evangelicals" and liberals, was utterly at variance with the majority of masters and dignitaries, who

were what was then considered “High Church,” though of this distinction I knew very little until I heard my tutor’s “chaff” about their Puseyism, or, as he used to call it, “Pussyism,” which, as he would say, “You won’t find in the Church Catty-chism—eh, your Majesty?” “Your Majesty” was the nickname he gave me. All his favourite pupils he nicknamed, and he never could mention any one of those so distinguished without a chuckle, indeed several chuckles, expressive of the greatest possible relish, either of the absurd inappropriateness of the name, or remembering the occasion when, being in most jocose humour, he had bestowed it on his pupil, who probably went through the world with it. Give a boy at Eton a really good nickname, and he can’t get rid of it,—it will stick to him through life, no matter what titles, what honours, may afterwards be heaped upon him; no matter how big a man, how important a personage, he may become. Henry Malet, for example, was always “Monsieur” at my tutor’s, though this nickname was quite unknown to the school generally; and this was true of all the nicknames conferred on us at various times of exhilaration by our tutor. “Monsieur’s” brother or “Malet *mi*,” Edward Malet (both of them, as all the world knows, were distinguished in diplomatic life), was christened “Pussy”; while Keighly Peach (afterwards in the Life Guards) was “Paychum” or sometimes “Polly Peach,” from the *Beggar’s Opera*. I forget what nicknames fell to the lot of Dick Biddulph and Hodge and other *æquales*, except that “Palk Major” was “Ajax.” Outside Cookesley’s these names were not commonly applied. One of my tutor’s pupils was Charles Dickens, eldest son of the great novelist, and it has ever been to me a matter of curiosity to know why Dickens, who went out of his way to learn so much and to write so admirably about all sorts of schools, never interested himself in Eton where his eldest

son received his education. I do not remember any allusion, of any sort, to Eton in any of his works. If Disraeli, who had nothing whatever to do with the school, could so cleverly sketch Eton life in *Coningsby* as to make that novel one of the first recommended to an Etonian as absolutely correct in every detail, as far as it went, how much more popular and of how far greater value would have been an Eton boy and Eton generally, as depicted by Charles Dickens, who could have learnt every little detail that he did not acquire by personal observation "on the spot" from his son, who was there for full four years! It is to me a problem. Young Charles was at a Dame's (Myddleton's, I think), and my tutor's pupil-room was where he and I used to meet, though otherwise I saw very little of him.

"Cokesley's" enjoyed more liberty than did any other house, Dame's or Tutor's, at Eton. Our tutor, Cokesley, was very fond of the drama in any form, from the classic Greek down to the latest farce, and in this matter differed from his sister and relatives, who were, every one of them, ultra-evangelical; very strict, but truly kind and charitable. It delighted our tutor to take a party of his house-pupils up to Windsor Theatre at night (of course quite occasionally, and only as a great treat) to see whatever performance happened to be then going on. If there were any very young members of the company, our tutor would go behind the scenes and tip them handsomely. On our return to his house he would have a good supper ready for us, and being in high spirits would indulge us (a first-rate audience of course, considering the circumstances) with imitations of popular actors, which amused us intensely, adapting quotations to us individually as he walked up and down the dining-room or stood on the hearthrug, hoisting up his coat-tails with both hands, and looking about right and left, putting his head on one side, cocking an eye in such a marvellously knowing manner, as

might be assumed by a preternaturally clever old bird, who was not, if he knew it, to be caught by chaff. I am pretty certain that these "theatre and supper afterwards" parties were unheard of outside "my tutor's." As he very seldom "put his nose in where he was not wanted," so it followed that he rarely visited our rooms. Sometimes, in consequence, perhaps, of representations being made to him by his sister, who acted as housekeeper and looked after us generally, he would make a hurried inspection of our apartments, and come in suddenly "on the pounce." Well do I remember his sudden appearance in "Monsieur's" (Malet major's) room, where we used occasionally to indulge in a surreptitious cigar. On this occasion, as it was not long since we had finished smoking, my tutor came in brusquely, sniffed, and eyed us, with his head on one side like the knowing old bird he affected to be. We, Monsieur, myself, and one or two other innocents, regarded one another inquiringly as if quite at a loss to guess what on earth there was in the room that should set my tutor a sniffing in this manner. "Um! your Majesty?" he would say, with a note of interrogation in his eye. "Um! Monsieur?" to Malet; with another note for him. We were silent.

"You've been smoking," he asserted sternly, yet always comically.

"Smoking, sir?" Malet would repeat hesitatingly, "not having a lie handy," as Lord Charles Beresford put it, when being unable to give an excuse for coming late to a dinner-party, he told the plain truth.

"Smoking, sir?" repeated our tutor, imitating Monsieur's manner so perfectly as to send me off into a fit of irresistible laughter. Powers of mimicry softened his heart towards us, and disposed him to pardon us there and then.

"Yes, smoking," he repeated, "eh, your Majesty?" with a queer glance at me.

"And where are the cigars, eh?" he asked, moving his head about in every direction.

"Cigars, sir?" repeated Malet, looking straight before him. "I don't see any, sir."

"No, of course, you dunderheaded Mossoo, of course you don't," he retorted explosively; "*but I do.*" Then pointing to the top of the bureau, where a box full of Havannahs was unblushingly displayed, "Fetch 'em down."

And Mossoo, making a grimace aside at me, proceeded to do as he had been told, and handed the box to my tutor.

"Nasty filthy habit," snapped my tutor.

"Please, sir, they were given to me," pleaded Mossoo.

"Oh, were they?" returned my tutor; "very well—I've a good mind to make you, both of you, write out and translate a hundred lines"—here our faces lengthened considerably—"but I'll let you off this time"—

"Oh, thank you, sir," from us all.

"Only—mind, if I catch you again"—here he paused on the Virgilian "*quos ego*" principle, and then added, "I'll give 'em you back at the end of the school time, Mossoo"; and so saying, with the box of choice Havannahs under his arm, he marched out and disappeared. After this "custom house" sort of visit we did not expect to see him again in our quarter for several weeks.

It was at Cookesley's, and at his suggestion, that we performed my first play, "by request," and also *Bombastes Furioso*. It was in consequence of my playing King Artaxominous that I was, by my tutor, ever after addressed as "Your Majesty."¹

¹ I have found the printed copy of my first farce, *Guy Fawkes Day*. It was "performed either in 1852 (or 1853), in the Easter school time." I fancy 1853 is the correct date. It was, so goes the *mem.* on the *Dramatis Personæ*, "preceded by 'a slight Prologue' by the same author, and followed by *Slasher and Crasher* by Maddison Morton."

At my tutor's I met Montagu Williams, who was a "tug," that is a "colleger," and in the sixth form, coming out in knee-breeches and evening dress, which was the costume *de rigueur* for those who had to make "speeches" in "upper school" on "Speech Days." Of Montagu I hope to have something to say later, as, though we never spoke to one another at Eton, he being so much my senior and so far above me in school, we were destined in after-life to be the greatest friends, and for some little time *collaborateurs* in plays for Robson at the Olympic and for the Wigans at the St. James's. All I remember of "Bob" Williams (the "Montagu" was never heard at Eton) was that he was sometimes addressed as "Shiney" (quoted and applied by my tutor, who remembered Dickens's "Shiney Villum," the ostler) and sometimes

"Scenery by Mr. Harrison, architect, under the direction of F. C. Burnand."

Until I recovered this evidence, I was under the impression that *Bombastes Furioso* formed part of *this* entertainment. *Bombastes*, I take it, was given by us at Christmas, and in consequence of its success we got up the original farce for the next performance.

The cast was—

Mr. Soapeton	.	.	.	.	.	A. COOKESLEY.
Mr. Tickleton (his cousin)	.	.	.	.	.	F. C. BURNAND.
Cracks (a swell-mobsmen)	.	.	.	.	.	E. B. MALET.
John	.	.	.	.	.	H. SMITH.
Buttons	.	.	.	.	.	W. PALK.
Cook	.	.	.	.	.	M. BIDDULPH.
Mrs. Soapeton	.	.	.	.	.	C. HODGE.
Two efficient members of the detective force.	.	.	.	.	.	Messrs. OLDFIELD and YONGE.

"Performance to begin punctually at half-past 7."

A. (*i.e.* "Gussy"). Cookesley died, I think, soon after the Crimean War, when he was in the Commissariat Department; E. B. Malet is now Sir Edward Malet; H. Smith, popularly known, after he left Eton, as "Nugget Smith" (2nd Life Guards), who in after-life "went under," I'm afraid, and disappeared; Wilmot Palk, dead; Myddleton Biddulph, a retired colonel, owner of Chirk Castle; Messrs. Hodge, Oldfield, and Yonge I have never, to my knowledge, met since these Eton days.

as "Sinner." Why "Sinner" I haven't an idea. Why "Shiney, was, because he had long, raven-black hair, which he used assiduously to pomade. "Shiney" was evident at a glance.

Well do I remember a little chap at Eton, at what Tutor's or Dame's I forget, standing in a mooning sort of way by the wall at Eton, near the corner where Spankie dispensed to his clients the goods that Spankie provided. A pale-visaged, unhealthy-looking boy he was, with a remarkably large hat, covering a head which was out of all symmetrical proportion to the small and dapperly attired body. His name, I ascertained, was Swinburne. I do not remember ever having set eyes on him again at Eton. But to forget him, as a boy, was impossible. Years afterwards, seeing Algernon Swinburne, the poet, at the Arts Club, I at once recognised in him Spankie's little client, whose name I had asked some fifteen years before. It so happens that, at the Arts Club, a *co-æqualis Etonensis* and a very stolid matter-of-fact young man, was, on this occasion, my companion. He was not a member of the club (to which, by the way, I had the pleasure of belonging in its very earliest days), and as the poet went out, I said to my friend, "That's Swinburne." He regarded me interrogatively. I explained, "Swinburne, the poet."

"No!!" he exclaimed, rushing to the door and peering after the retreating figure with a kind of awe depicted on his countenance. Then he returned, and repeated in a low tone, indicating a certain incredulity—

"*That! That—Swinburne, the poet!!*"

I answered, "Yes, that's the very man. Why?"

"Why!" he repeated; then, as if utterly dumb-founded by the discovery, he exclaimed, "Why, *he was at school with us!!*"

"Us" was lovely. That so distinguished a person

as Swinburne could ever have been at school with "the likes" of two such commonplace persons as self and friend was, to the latter, a discovery so far-reaching in its consequences that I thought he would never have got over it. Perhaps he never has: for the moment it totally unhinged him. Be this as it may, *I never saw him again*. His disappearance (as far as I am concerned) dates from the evening ever memorable for the identification of Swinburne with the small boy who used to buy tarts of Spankie "at the wall" of Eton College.

Before I quit this pleasant time at Eton, I must recount a scene in which my tutor figured to the immense amusement of all his pupils. There was a practical-joking boy, now a sedate member of the Legislature, who was in possession of a trifling incident in the life of a contemporaneous Etonian, one of my tutor's upper-form pupils, yclept "Palk Ma," but known to us as christened by the Rev. Gifford Cookesley, "Ajax." Why "Ajax" I never learnt; but he was "Ajax" long before I arrived, and "Ajax" he remained till his departure.

Now "Ajax," as a sixth-form boy, was invariably "put on" to construe when the others in pupil-room had either signally failed or had been so long "humming and hawing" over their Homer as to cause our tutor (in summer time, and hot at that) to frequently rub his light curly hair violently, and exclaim (not in elegant, classic, or English, language) petulantly, "Barnish your lousy head, you stupid ass!" and in despair to call upon his son Gussy Cookesley or Ajax Palk for a rapid and correct reading of the passage in question, whereat the clever cohort of fools, including "His Majesty," "Mossoo," "Paychum," and a few others, would chuckle and bring out their pencils in order to note down every word, and so have their lesson ready by eleven o'clock school. Thus it came about that, one hot summer morning,

tutor and boys were all intent on their work, with only about forty minutes to complete it. The window was wide open—you could step out of it on to the walk outside; the door of pupil-room was also wide open, leading on to a passage from which the exit on to the school walk was by the house door (for pupils), likewise open.

Now, on this particular morning, when we, the "lazy noodle brigade," were more than usually dense, the flies more than usually troublesome, a wasp or so giving a look in and invariably making for my tutor, who, "with vest unbuttoned," tie awry, and hair as ruffled by his right hand as was his temper by our stupidity, was fast losing any good temper that he might have had at the commencement of the lesson, and was becoming more and more irritable every second, there came a voice, clear as the one that in the poem uttered "Excelsior," which cried out "Ullo! Dumpkins!"

We were all aghast! Considered by itself, there is nothing very terrible in the word "Dumpkins." It suggested nothing in particular, yet, somehow, everything in general. My tutor paused in his reference to "the learned scholiast," put his head on one side, cocked his right ear, eyed us, but listened inclining towards the window. No further repetition of the cry. We looked at one another—wondering. Then we began to smile. Why we smiled it would be impossible to say. But—that smile was fatal. Clearly, to our tutor's mind, that smile was one of recognition. It proved to him that all who were smiling *must* be in the conspiracy, of which "Dumpkins" was the watchword. He eyed us sternly, curiously; sniffed suspiciously; drew a long breath, and then, trying to continue as if nothing particular had happened, or that the voice had been merely something "in the air," or that he had "imagined it," he recommenced, with severe emphasis—

"Well, as I was saying, as to this passage, which has

been much disputed by various commentators, the learned scholiast remarks”—here he fishes up a ponderous book with equally ponderous notes, and slowly repeats—“the learned scholiast-remarks”—

“Dumpkins!”

It was the voice again! Whence? whose?

My tutor paused not half a second; out of the window he went; on to the walk; down to the low wall that bordered the high road; looked to the right of him, looked to the left of him. But . . . “some one had blundered”—that is, *he* had; for not the slightest vestige of boy, bird, man, or beast was to be seen anywhere. He looked up at the windows opposite; not a sign; not a laugh; not a sound. Then he returned, by the door. We had just time to ask, “What might this portend?” to inquire rapidly in undertones, “Do *you* know who it was?” But if any boy did know, he didn’t tell, and only one there was aware of what “Dumpkins” meant—only one, and he, you may depend upon it, never gave us any clue, either then or subsequently. It was, even to *us*, most mysterious. My tutor returned, glowering. Then he asked majestically—

“Does any one here know who called out ‘Dumpkins’?”

No one did. My tutor pounced upon all those who, he considered, would probably be “in the know,” but in every instance he drew blank. One or two upper boys he asked. *They* didn’t know.

“Gussy,” he inquired of his eldest son, “do you know?”

No; Gussy was as ignorant and as innocent as the others. The only one who could have given him any information he never asked: that one was “Ajax.”

“I’ve a great mind to ‘complain’ of you all,” he said, scowling at the assembly. Whereat the nervous looked glum, while the foolish tittered.

Once more he appealed; and we collectively assured him emphatically, on our honour, that we knew nothing whatever about "Dumpkins."

"I swear I'll find out," declared my tutor, "and mind"—here he shook his head at us menacingly—"if I discover that any one of you here is mixed up in this, I'll have him so soundly swished as will make him cry out something very different to"—

"Dumpkins!" shouted the voice from, as it appeared, just outside, behind my tutor's back!

Not a second lapsed; out went my tutor brandishing a huge book—the ends of his white tie flying—out this time by the door, not by the window, thus giving the owner of the voice that had been, as they say in stage directions, "heard without," a minute or so "law." Up we all got, out of the window, out at the door; not rushing, but yet eagerly, in time to see my tutor, capless, his gown flying, pursuing nothing in particular as fast as he could stride (it was not a run) down towards Barnes Bridge, stopping only for half a minute to look round the corner on his left where there was a chance of the fugitive having sought safety; here a lounging "cad," one of the regulars, whose existence would have been forfeit had he aided and abetted a boy as against a master, touching his hat, evidently replied to my tutor's question by pointing towards Barnes Bridge. My tutor pursued his course, then suddenly pulled up right on Barnes Bridge, for it had evidently occurred to him, as it had done to us all, that if the culprit had fled down town he must return by this, the only way, in order to be in time for eleven o'clock school, it being now just within a few minutes of the hour. In the meantime we asked one another why my tutor was so irritated at hearing any one call out "Dumpkins." No one could explain. It was a mystery. However, there stood my tutor on Barnes Bridge, just drawing himself a little on

one side so as to be out of the way of the wheels of the old rattling 'bus that used to ply between Windsor and the railway station at Slough. The driver touched his hat to my tutor, and begged pardon for having so closely shaved him; my tutor hardly took any notice of him, but kept his eyes fixed on Eton Street. The 'bus rattled on through Eton and disappeared.

Eleven struck. The masters came from their different houses to assemble in "chambers" for ten minutes; but Cookesley did not budge. That boy who called out "Dumpkins" was to be caught, and, explanation or no explanation, he was to be flogged severely, ay, and perhaps "turned down" from his class, and given a long "poena," which would keep him in for the greater part of the next three weeks. These were the vows of vengeance our tutor was breathing; this was what he intended to do, as he fiercely informed us afterwards, had he caught the boy who had interrupted him in his lecture by shouting "Dumpkins."

Ten minutes past eleven. No Dumpkins. All the masters had disappeared into their several classrooms, and all the boys after them. Only the hum of the busy Etonian bees arose from the college hive. All at work everywhere, save only Cookesley and his division. The division began to think it was what was known as a "run," *i.e.* that the master wasn't coming, and therefore that there would be no eleven o'clock school. But the sight of my tutor returning from "keeping the bridge" demolished these vain hopes.

He had hit on an infallible plan. After his "præpostor" had taken down the names of all present, and found not a single absentee (unless on the sick-list), my tutor sent him round to all the classrooms for the purpose of inquiring of every master if any boy was missing. No; "the bills"

were inspected; all the boys were there; not a single truant.

My tutor was bothered. We had all heard the cry of "Dumpkins." Yes; all. Had we recognised the voice? No, we hadn't. No more had he. So for that day there was an end of the matter. But for days and days afterwards, my tutor, standing by the open window during morning pupil-room, could only give a very divided attention to the lesson, being ever on the alert for the mysterious cry of "Dumpkins." The Eton policeman was put on the watch; the "cads" were warned and threatened, but nothing was ever again heard of the voice that cried "Dumpkins," nor did its owner come forward and acknowledge his guilt.

It was long after I had quitted Eton that the story (given as the true one, but not to be vouched for here) came out. Ajax, who stood much on his sixth-form dignity, and who was a "very proper" boy (most amiable, but generally considered as "very proper") was induced, much against his will, to accept an invitation to a picnic in Windsor Park. Here he went after four, and had been excused his six o'clock absence. It was a rowdy party of friends from London, and the only Eton boy as a guest was Palk *ma*. They all had too much champagne, and, on some utterly idiotic inspiration, "Ajax," at that midsummer *al fresco* orgie, was perpetually addressed as "Dumpkins," and in that character became "the cause of wit in others." A sudden thunderstorm scattered them; and Ajax was too glad to "defy the lightning" and flee for his life and reputation from his companions, among whom was a syren, to whose pressing entreaties to him as "Dumpkins" to stay he turned a deaf ear and fled precipitately. The party who had come down for the day returned to town that same evening, all of them, that is, except the young

lady, who happened to be on a visit to some friends near Slough.

Now our practical-joking schoolfellow mentioned above happened to be among the very few day-boarders at Eton living at his mother's house between Eton and Slough. The story about "Dumpkins" at the picnic was repeated in the presence, at home, of the aforesaid imitator of Theodore Hook. And he in a thoughtless moment of leisure before eleven o'clock school time wandered past Cookesley's, and thinking that the window of Ajax's room looked out *from above* on to the wall, and not seeing the pupil-room window open *below* and Cookesley close to it lecturing, had shouted out mischievously, "Ullo! Dumpkins!" to which, as has been already recorded, no attention was paid. The practical joker then suddenly catching sight of pupil-room full, and my tutor pausing in his lecture, thought that here was indeed an opportunity, and repeating the cry of "Ullo! Dumpkins!" bolted straight into the opening that led into Joynes's house on his left and lay *perdu* until my tutor had finished his search. Then, after waiting until Cookesley was safely in pupil-room and had recommenced lecturing, he ventured forth, treated him to another cry of "Dumpkins," and being a very swift runner he was down the street and over Barnes Bridge just in time to *catch the railway omnibus*, the conductor of which had, as it happened, jumped off to leave a parcel. Taking advantage of his absence, our practical joker opened the door, nipped in, and hid himself under the seat. Luckily for him not a single passenger entered while driving through Eton, and directly they reached the corner of the college wall before entering on the Slough Road, up popped our young friend (his books in his hand, for he was prepared for eleven o'clock school, and had been only idling about "when Satan finds, etc. etc.," *vide* Dr. Watts), tipped the conductor, who shared with the driver, and then returned through the college and

gained the school-yard in plenty of time, that is, before ten minutes past eleven, *to take his place in Cookesley's own class, to which he belonged !* This practical joker, though owning to many escapades of about the same date, never did anything "within measurable distance" of this—at least not to my knowledge.

CHAPTER VII

SIC TRANSIT ETONA—ILLNESS—DR. GOODFORD'S FAREWELL—INTERIM VACATION—LYDIA THOMPSON—SHAW STEWART—IN WINDSOR PARK—RENCONTRE—DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE—FROM ETON TO LONDON—RIVER TRIP—AN ESCAPE—AMONG THE CAMERONS—THOMPSONS IN DEVONSHIRE—HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

I WAS getting along well enough at Eton, as I gather from my "dear diary," in which I jotted down matters at rare intervals up to the end of 1851, when I had in November completed my fifteenth year, and therein I find slang Etonian words, now probably obsolete ; and, as a rule, I can obtain as clear a view of how we boys, or some of us, spent a day at Eton in September as a skilled decipherer of hieroglyphics might gather from fragments on *papyri*, assisted by illustrations by contemporary artists. Designs of a somewhat similar character I find in my *Poetæ Græci* and other school-books, which, with characteristic regard for literature, illustrated or not, I have carefully preserved. I find that I was continually purchasing light literature, and had established a kind of lending library : that I dealt with framemakers and bookbinders ; that I had written one or two extravaganzas ; that I was in fairly constant correspondence with my friend Hamilton Woodgate at Harrow ; expressing in my

diary, by the way, regret that I had not been at Harrow with him, but consoling myself with the reflection that Eton had some amusements, such as boating and "fives," which Harrow did not possess, and that fagging with us was nothing like so bad as it was with the Harrovians. So I was content. I seem to have been very much in earnest about football, fives, boating, and examination for fifth form. And I suppose that I enjoyed it all very much; but I fancy I enjoyed the holidays and the theatres more, as I find notes about my father writing to inform me that he had "seen Wright and Bedford in *Giralda*, but they were not so good as Compton and Cooke," whom I had seen; and that "Hudson was very good in *Born to Good Luck*." Hudson was a delineator of Irish character, but I only remember him as Tim Moore the Irish tailor, who is mistaken for Tom Moore the poet, in which character, I am quite sure, he did not amuse me very much; but I never saw the Irishman on the stage that did amuse me until Boucicault appeared as Myles-na-Coppaleen.

Illness was the cause of my leaving Eton earlier than I should otherwise have done. Bransby Cooper the surgeon was brought down to Eton by my father, and though after one operation I was back again for a short while, yet my summer half was broken into, and I had to pay a visit to London and to the eminent surgeon Sir Benjamin Brodie, to whom I was taken by Bransby Cooper. The latter was a rough-and-ready medico of the old school, whose one eye (the other a very bad dummy) did not favourably impress me. Little Sir Benjamin gained my confidence at once, and he, assisted by our own medical man, Mr. Gardner, performed the operation of illustrating me with two cuts, which might have been three, but for Mr. Gardner's detecting an unexplored portion, which at once became the object of Sir Benjamin's attention. This last was the unkindest cut of all. In those days anæsthetics were rarely administered,

and I had to "take my punishment" standing. For weeks afterwards I could only crawl on all-fours. I was laid up (never shall I forget the great misery of the first month of it) from about the first week in July until the middle of October. My father was no longer a widower; and as this was his first season as a remarried man, there were dinner parties and music parties and card parties, and in fact the house was gay and festive below, while I was a prisoner in my rooms above, where I read more consecutively than I have ever done before or since, and so laid in quite a stock of interesting knowledge, more or less useful, and the greater part of it highly entertaining. By the way, I may note that it was at this time I first met with the celebrated ballad (by Thackeray) of "Little Billee," which was set out at length in a book of travel, entitled *Sand and Canvas*, by whom written I forget; but I fancy there was joint-authorship to it, and that it was a very popular work. As visitors to cheer me up, I had cousins and uncles and aunts, a young man or two from Eton on their way home; but Eton to me was now a thing of the past. When I was recovered I went up for one day to bid my tutor good-bye, and to "take leave" of the headmaster, then no longer Dr. Hawtrey, but Dr. Goodford,¹ who presented me with Hallam's *Constitutional History*, handsomely bound in two volumes, as a regulation "leaving book" (charged in the bill, I suppose, as was the "swishing" which, like the book, we also received from the headmaster's hands), and then the little man, in cap and doctor's gown, walked to the window while spasmodically chatting about my future intentions, but delicately avoiding any reference to my *present* intention, which was to place, somewhere on his study table, a ten-pound note, representing the regulation "leaving

¹ Dr. Hawtrey became Provost in 1852, and Goodford succeeded him in the headmastership, as he did subsequently in the Provostship in 1862.

money " (leaving-on-the-table money), *honorarium*, or whatever it might be termed. Most supremely ridiculous ! there was Dr. Goodford with his back to me, but one eye over his shoulder, just to be quite certain at what precise moment the deed was done, and his somewhat impatient twitch of the head suggested that if it were going to be done at all it were well it were done quickly, as done it must be ; while I, having forgotten the pocket in which the two fivers were stowed away, searched nervously in them all unsuccessfully, until I dived into the side-pocket of my jacket, brought out the envelope containing them, and then stood looking about for a clear spot on the library table where I could place them " on deposit."

To this day I remember as vividly as if it had happened only yesterday my reluctance at parting with a sum, the like of which, *all at once*, in notes, it had never been my good fortune to possess, and in exchange for which I was not conscious of having received any *quid pro quo* or rather *pro quid*. Having a keen sense of humour, a quality not remarkable in the worthy Dr. Goodford, though of course in this instance he could hardly have been expected to enter into my views very heartily, it flashed across me what a comic scene would ensue after I had left the room and the house, if I did *not* leave the money on the table. Or, if I had no right to pocket it, at least *I might hide it*, and then I should have, so to speak, " a run for my money," as the headmaster would be bound to send for me, would have to ask me, nay, coax me into revealing where the amount was secreted ; and he couldn't punish me in any way, as I had taken leave, and was no longer under his rule. There are many things I regret *having* done, but whenever I recall this situation to mind I invariably am quite annoyed with myself for having let slip so unique an opportunity of immortalising the headmaster and myself in the history of

Eton. Would there have been no witnesses? Oh, indeed there would. The doctor's butler would have been called in to assist in the search, and doubtless the doctress and daughters, if there were any. But the golden opportunity passed irrevocably; the notes in the envelope were duly placed on the table. Dr. Goodford assisted me in politely bowing myself out of the room, and then no doubt pounced on the envelope, held the flimsies up to the light, and with a sigh of satisfaction placed them in his tin box. Then with such traps and oddments as I had to bring away from my tutor's, and having seen Friday, the old college servant, and paid him a sovereign to take care that my name was duly carved among the "worthies" in upper school, where I suppose it may be seen, in excellent company, to this day, I got into the fly, and waving my hand to a very few boys (whom I probably didn't know) who happened to be lounging about "the wall," I bade a long farewell to "Ye antique spires" and "Henry's holy shade" generally, and drove off to Slough, and thence to London, whence, after a few days' rest, I journeyed down to a private tutor's in Devonshire, who was to prepare me—I was just nearly seventeen—for matriculation at Trinity College, Cambridge, which I was expected to face in about a year from this date.

Like Arthur Pendennis at Grey Friars, I was, as Thackeray describes him, "in no way remarkable, either as a dunce or as a scholar. He never read to improve himself out of school hours, but, on the contrary, devoured all the novels, plays, and poetry on which he could lay his hands."

Thackeray's Pendennis at Grey Friars, *i.e.* Charterhouse, brings to my mind vividly Etonians of my own time, "who assumed all the privileges of men long before they quitted that seminary. Many of them, for example, smoked cigars; and some had already begun the practice of inebriation."

I refer the reader to the entire passage, *fabula narratur de Etonâ*. And then Thackeray's adjuration to the fathers and mothers ! " Why," says he, " if you could hear those boys of fourteen, who blush before mothers and sneak off in silence in the presence of their daughters, talking among each other ; it would be the woman's turn to blush then." And so forth. I do not imagine that in my day, or indeed at any time, Eton was a bit worse, as regards moral and religious teaching by word and example, than any other of our public schools. It has turned out (as have the other schools) first-rate men, who might have been just as " first-rate " had they been Wykehamists, Harrovians, or Rugbæans. If its system presented in my day many social advantages, it had not a few serious disadvantages. Perhaps *on a changé tout cela*, and for the better : I hope so. It is a dear old place to boys, and, in another sense, a very dear place to parents. There is a lot of " cant " about Eton, as there is about all ancient institutions. I daresay 'tis just the same with Winchester, Harrow, and Rugby. The boys are supposed to start on a social equality, whatever their rank may be ; and fagging, like love, levels all distinctions. " Fagging " in my day was a most decided leveller. Whether it is so nowadays, I cannot say. But after a while the value of a boy's acquaintance comes to be a matter of calculation ; deference is paid to the length of his purse, or to the distinction of his title ; and the son of a millionaire, well provided with cash, can at his own expense purchase the services of any amount of " toadies " and " tufties " (nay, a " tufty " of limited means can himself become a " toady " in a certain degree) from the age of fourteen up to nineteen, especially where there are worldly-minded parents, whose sole object in sending their sons to a public school is that they may " better themselves " by making friends (no matter on what terms) with present

or future dukes, earls, baronets, who may be, as the ambitious parents hope, of the greatest possible use to them (and indirectly to their parents) in after-life. There are little "Wenhams" and "Waggs" in every school, as at Eton, and always will be, I suppose, while not a tutor who respects himself is without the latest edition of the Peerage on his study table.

As to myself, in bidding good-bye to Eton, I ask, reflectively, how many Etonians whose acquaintance I first made at Eton have I been able to reckon upon in any time of "need" as "friends indeed"? Can I count them on my fingers? I can, certainly; only we will drop one hand altogether, and fold downwards on to the palm two out of the five fingers of the other. Seven from ten, if you please? An elementary sum in subtraction. And of these three I had lost all count for years. I shall come upon two of them in due course; neither of them was up with me at Cambridge, where, during my residence, I saw the last of my Etonian friendships. *Sic transit gloria Etonæ*, and here as a "tag" I may quote a passage from my own diary for September 1850, wherein, comparing Eton with Harrow, I say: "Harrow is still going up. Let it. Whatever it will be, Eton will still be Eton. No change can come over the charm of that Dissyllable word, 'scenes of my joys Hopes and disappointments whate'er thy faults I love thee still' as Mr. C. Kean would say."

The above extract is given *verbatim*. I was thorough enough about Eton *then*, in my fourteenth year. And so I am now, only with a difference.

N.B.—I learnt to grill chicken to perfection, to make excellent coffee and delicious "buttered eggs" for breakfast.

"Decidedly I have a better memory than I thought I had!" The case in point which forced from me this ejaculation is as follows. I remember in the interim between leaving

Eton and going to a private tutor's an event which for me, so theatrically inclined, as may have been gathered from the preceding veracious account of certain performances at "my tutor's," was of the greatest importance; an event to be marked with a white stone in my calendar, or at least in indelible blue ink. What event? Why, no less than my introduction to a charming young actress; an actress who began by making a hit, and finished ere she retired in making a name; an actress who is alive and well as I write (may she so continue, *ad multos annos*!), but not so alive and kicking as she used to be, when she danced the prettiest steps in the world, uttered fairly good lines in so piquant a manner as made them pass for first-class witticisms, and played "boys' parts" so charmingly, that to "go and see Lydia Thompson," in no matter what the piece might happen to be, was an incentive to the very laziest *habitué* of the theatres. And I remember her first appearance in London! But more—she was the first actress I ever met in private life—the very first actress whom, as Eton boys used to phrase it, "I knew at home." Well, I can't exactly say "knew," and I never returned to Eton to boast of my acquaintance; or, if the event was not in the Easter vacation of my last year at Eton, and if I did return there, I am sure that no mention of her ever passed my lips. But I fancy the introduction must have taken place in the winter, when she was playing the Christmas piece, and not in the Easter time, when she would have finished her engagement. Be that as it may—and no Empire will fall, no Government collapse, by reason of my failure of correctness in dates—I remember big, burly, jovial, red-faced Michael Shaw Stewart, who had but recently obtained his commission in the Guards, and was soon to go out to the Crimea, asking me to come with him and call upon "Little Lydia," who was at that very time performing as "Little Silverhair" in the pantomime of *Harlequin and the*

Three Bears, or Little Silverhair and the Fairies, at the Haymarket Theatre.

Joyously I accepted the invitation, profoundly reverencing Michael Shaw Stewart, who was about two years my senior, and considering myself "at my time of life" (I was just past sixteen) as highly privileged.

How well I remember the room! How well I remember Shaw Stewart doing all the talking to the aunt or mother, and how well I remember her, the goddess of my idolatry (*pour le moment*), in child's skirts!

Seated on a highish chair (not a nursery one), with her legs tucked up, and utterly ignoring the second visitor, myself, who appeared as "Charles his friend," a person "of no importance," she attended only to Shaw Stewart, who did most of the talking except when Lydia, or her guardian, joined in.

That was my first approach to the mysterious barrier that divides the "unseen" behind the scenes from the ordinary world of "friends in front." I looked; I admired; open-mouthed I wondered. Probably I said nothing at all; blissful fatuity crushed me. "I never told my love, but like a worm," etc.—that is, I never mentioned the fact to a living soul (I wonder why?), but as I write this I receive an answer to an inquiry from the clever little sprightly lady herself which perfectly corroborates my recollection of this "small and early" event.

"Yes," writes Mrs. Henderson, *née* Lydia Thompson, "the correct date of my *first* appearance was December 26, 1853, at the Haymarket Theatre, as 'Little Silverhair' in the pantomime of *Harlequin and the Three Bears, or Little Silverhair and the Fairies*. It was the first pantomime ever played at the Haymarket. *Entre nous* I was then just upon fourteen years old, my birthday falling in February." Then Mrs. Henderson further corroborates my recollection as to

where she resided with some old friend of her mother's (so it was not her mother or aunt by whom we were received); and then she adds, as to Michael Shaw Stewart, "I remember the name quite well, but I am ashamed to say I do not remember the juvenile visitor (*me*), and I trust he will forgive me for this lapse of memory." Isn't that delightful! But I shall never forget her as Little Silverhair. Ah, those first impressions! Well, well, the years roll on, and 'tis I who am the "Silverhair," not "little" but "much Silverhair" (with plenty of fairies about, of the second generation), and I trust as long as I have a part to play I may perform it creditably until the final "curtain." . . . And then the criticism.¹ The stage-bias was always with me, it is evident. *Passons.*

Although Queen Victoria so frequently stayed at Windsor, I do not remember ever having seen her driving through Eton, and only once did I catch sight of Her Majesty's carriage with outriders in the Long Walk. It was here quite close to the gates that poor "Hippy Damer," whose career (after leaving Eton for the Guards) about town was the theme of much amusing gossip, is said to have hailed the Royal carriage with a convivial and genial "How are you? How are you?" and to have said, as he advanced towards the carriage in which Her Majesty was seated, "How are you? I r'member your face, but can't put a name to it." The story is well known, "extant," and, as are so many about "Hippy Damer" and "Duffer Bruce," of course "written in *very choice*" English, as are most of the simple nursery tales about these two ingenuous youths.

One visitor to Eton whom I shall never forget "as long

¹ And as I write, it is just a little before Christmas, Silverhair, without the little bears and the fairies, actually arrives. The fairy godmothers have been very good to her. She is as bright and as lively as ever, and her daughter, Miss Tilbury, has already made her mark as a *comédienne*.

as memory holds her seat in this distracted frame" is the old Duke of Cambridge (father of the late Duke, whose death at an advanced age we had recently to deplore). a very grand old man to look at, with a powerfully sonorous voice, which he employed when in Eton College chapel to some purpose. Service was proceeding quietly enough, from "the wicked man" to the first exhortation to pray, when in response to the college chaplain's (or "conduit's") melodiously intoned,

"Let us pray!"

there came from the Provost's corner in the stalls, occupied as the place of honour by the distinguished visitor, a loud voice, that replied, as spokesman for himself and everybody present, in the heartiest possible tone—

"Yes, by all means!"

How startled were all the boys! How they all faced round, and, regardless of the sanctity of the chapel, nudged each other, asking, "Who's that?" and receiving for answer, "That's the Duke of Cambridge." Evidently no one except a royal duke could dare to raise his voice above that of the clergyman conducting the service. The choir was not in it with the Duke, or the Duke not in it with the choir, and "the sound of his grand Amen" was not to be dominated even by the organ. I have heard and read of "hearty services," but no part in any such service could be rendered with greater heartiness than was that for which His Royal Highness cast himself in the programme of Eton College chapel—"for that occasion only," as far as my recollection of it goes.

One of the freshest of my Eton recollections is of a delightful river trip on the first day of midsummer or an Easter—a late Easter—vacation. I cannot exactly fix it, but I fancy it must have been very near the time of my farewell. Jack Paynter, whose father, the then well-known

police magistrate, had a house at Richmond overlooking the Thames, with, I think, Sparkes, "our friend," and another lad of the name of Pearson, like the three sailors of Bristol City "took a boat," and on the last day of school time started in the early morning to go "home for the holidays." Spring or summer, it was glorious weather; that is what I remember, perfectly. We breakfasted at Ankerwick, being there hospitably entertained by "the Priors," who were the tenants of that delightfully situated promontory or island (I forget which it is), and then paddled or floated without effort on a strong tide from lock to lock, amazingly enjoying the *dolce far niente* of the trip, lazying all the way, with occasional refreshment, until we reached our destination. At his father's house Jack Paynter put us up for the night. We boys were its only occupants; a sympathetic butler watched over us. We had a grand repast in the freest and easiest style; and afterwards, with pipes or cigars, we "finished our wine" while playing several games in the billiard-room. It was late before we went to bed, but most considerately Jack Paynter had told the benignant butler "not to sit up for us" as "we" would see that everything was all right. Oh fortunate disobedience of the butler!

The next morning, in the dining-room, Jack Paynter, who had the coolest manner and the pleasantest purr of a laugh, observed casually—

"I say, you chaps, who turned out the gas in the billiard-room last night?"

I thought *I* did; Sparkes was pretty sure *he* did; Pearson was almost certain that he remembered having at all events turned off *one* of the lights.

"Well," said Jack Paynter honestly, "I'd have sworn I saw to them all before I left the room, because I knew the *guv'nor* is awfully particular about it."

"Didn't you?" we asked.

"I don't know how it was," went on Jack Paynter in his quiet, smiling manner, "but old Dobson—that's our butler, you know—he somehow thought we *mightn't* have turned it off, and so he got up early before any of the maids were about, and I'm doosid glad to say—he's a knowing old bird is Dobson—he went into the room *without a candle*."

"Well?" we were breathless.

"Well," continued Jack, his smile increasing as if gradually letting out the very cream of the joke—"well—he was nearly knocked down."

"Knocked down!" we exclaimed.

"Yes," Jack proceeded very leisurely, while helping himself to coffee,—“yes—nearly knocked down—the billiard-room was choke-full of gas, and if he had gone in with a candle we should have been all blown to kingdom come."

"By Jove!!!" This was unanimous.

After a pause Sparkes said, "My! how lucky! I say! suppose one of us had gone in with a light!"

"If the room were full of gas," I observed, "it's rather lucky *Sparkes* didn't go near it, eh?"

Evidently we had all been in such a condition as proverbially calls for the interference of a special beneficent Providence.

After such an escape of gas it is pleasant to recount that all three heroes came unscathed through the Crimean War, but only very occasionally within the next few years did this light-hearted and, for the occasion, light-headed *trio* meet with the present narrator. We were the greatest friends; we are so now, though I am pretty sure that only two of this party are alive to tell the tale. And I only hope the other one will corroborate me.

I will pass over lightly the pleasant time I spent at

Cameron's in Somersetshire, where I began to prepare for going up to "Trinity College, Cambridge," by learning how to drive a dogcart. Mr. Cameron was one of the old high-and-dry school of Anglican clergy. He was a good shot; and more of a squarson than a parson. He was a connection of our family, having married a cousin of my father's, Miss Louisa Sapte. Mrs. Henry Cameron, the novelist, is his daughter-in-law. There were two pupils besides myself, both rather rackety chaps, but very good companions. To these two my cart and horse were a source of considerable pleasure—and pain—while I was perfecting myself in the inexpensive acquisition of the art of driving. The smashes and spills with which I commenced, the damages to life and limb that my fellow-pupils sustained, were all practical illustrations of the American minister's dictum, now grown into a world-wide proverb, that "he who never makes a mistake, never makes anything." What a favourite with the eccentric Jack Mitton I should have been at that time! Fortunately, I knew nothing of him and his wild driving, or perhaps I might have been tempted to emulate some of his least mad performances. One thing is certain, that if I found one adage true in respect to my conduct at this time, there was another, namely, that "who breaks, pays," I proved to demonstration in my case absolutely false. I broke; my father (bless him!) paid. I may here observe, *parenthetically*, and the adverb is not introduced *à propos* of my father for the sake of a pun (I hold up my left hand in Johnsonian horror at the notion! *Ecce!*—"Satan rebuking sin!"), that my father was somewhat indulgent in money matters where his son was concerned. But in those old prosperous days—well—there was only one of the family, that is my Uncle George, who had the true trading instincts of the "universal provider." He was lavish, but lucky.

From Cousin Cameron's in Somersetshire I was forwarded to the Rev. Mr. Thompson's at Blackborough in Devonshire. Mr. Thompson, whose patron had, I think, been Lord Eglinton, was in possession of the living of Blackborough, and occupied a large white mansion, built in the Italian style at the top of a steep hill, and commanding a magnificent view of the country. Mr. Thompson was a delightful man and an excellent tutor, one of the very few masters I remember who contrived to interest his pupil in the work he had in hand. He could make the study of Euclid a pastime, and the working out of logarithms a recreation. Then the society of the place was such as—

"Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros."

His sister-in-law, Miss Voules,—a cousin, I think, of the late witty, most amusing raconteur and ready writer, James Payn, of whose sayings and doings, both before and after his going up to Cambridge, many legends existed at Blackborough,—was a lady possessing considerable accomplishments, a keen appreciation of humour, and her laughter was infectious. What fun it all was! and what fun a young clergyman, the Rev. Stafford Northcote, with fair, curly hair, blue eyes (or blue spectacles, I forget which), could be whenever he visited the house, as he frequently did. Mr. Thompson's musical efforts were, if I remember, confined to performances on the cornet-à-piston or key bugle, with whose notes he would not only wake the echoes round about, which was a matter of no particular importance to anybody, but would arouse us from sleep at about six in the morning. As the hunting song has it—

"The sound of his horn woke me from my bed,"

my tutor appearing in his favourite character of "John Peel." Then there were picnics, and rides, and drives, and

everything that could make country life pleasant ; so it was no wonder that, not only then, but at a rather later time, while still at Cambridge, when I recalled these days, the life of an English clergyman in a pretty country parish, with "cheerful surroundings," should have represented itself to me as an ideal existence. Perhaps, *cherchez la femme* may be applied here ; and, *entre nous*, I am somewhat of that opinion myself. A Miss Fotheringay to a youthful Arthur Pendennis ? Perhaps. *Passons*. But, if this were the case, depend upon it the vision of beauty that fascinated me at seventeen must by then have been able to assert her superiority over me by at least five years. The odds were in *her* favour, as twenty-two to seventeen. I do not say it *was* so ; but I think it must have been so, either at this time, or, when once again, a year or so later, I visited these parts and both renewed and extended my acquaintance. However, the scene changed, and while it is being shifted, let us take a look round at some "views of London" that I still have retained on the retina of my mind's eye.

CHAPTER VIII

IN AND ABOUT TOWN—LAURA—THACKERAY—
CORA PEARL—AGNES WILLOUGHBY—A
LONG DRIVE—OUR SAD EXPERIENCE—FEL-
BRIGG—TAGLIONI—CARLOTTA GRISI—
EVANS'S—SERGEANT BALLANTINE—JUDGE
AND JURY—FOLEY ROOMS—OTHER HAUNTS
—BIRTHDAY—UP TO TRINITY—MY FIRST
PLAY IN PUBLIC—THE FITZGERALDS
—MERRY MOMENTS

WHAT with my holidays when at Eton and during my private tuition, spent, as they were, principally in London, in company with young men about town for companions all considerably older than myself, my experience as to "what was going on" was certainly above the average of that possessed ordinarily by youths of my age. I had a kind of admiration for "Foker" as he was when he visited Pendennis at Fair Oaks, and inclined to such nocturnal metropolitan amusements as were the delight of a certain Jack Johnson and his friends in the days of *The Adventures of Mr. Ledbury*, as at that period racily recounted by Albert Smith. Certainly I was not one of those "home-keeping youths who have ever homely wits." But great and many as are the superficial changes, "town life" and *la vie de Bohème* remain, essentially, the same. I say advisedly "essentially"

as, with a change of name and the adoption of various cunning devices calculated to render the act of no effect as far as concerns those who can pay for breaking through its provisions, the night life of London in the twentieth century is very much the same as it was in the middle of the nineteenth century, when it had very considerably altered from what, as we see pictured and described in *Tom and Jerry*, it was at its commencement.

As a "boy about town" I remember several notorious Hetairæ being pointed out to me as they rode in spanking style in the Row, were driven in open landaus, or charioteered themselves about Hyde Park in the season. The most memorable of these was "Laura Bell," whose name, strange to say, Thackeray chose for his virtuous, quiet, and rather insipid heroine in *Pendennis*. Clearly do I call to mind Laura Bell's pretty, doll-like face, her big eyes, not ignorant of an artistic touch that added a lustre to their natural brilliancy, and her quick vivacious glances as she sat in an open phaeton, vivaciously talking with a variety of men, all "swells" of the period of course, at the corner of the drive near the Achilles statue, while her smart little "tiger" stood at the horses' heads. What strange stories I used to hear of her recklessness, her prodigality, her luxury, and her cleverness! Was not her *liaison* with the chief of the Nepaulese princes, Jung Bahadoor, who alone was a temporary fortune to her, the theme of "songs of the period" such as were sung by one Sharpe, after midnight, at Evans's, when all the fresh-voiced boy-choristers had retired to bed, and when, indeed, it would have been better had some of us, including the present honest chronicler, been tucked up ere we commenced injuring our health without perceptibly benefiting our morals? Her name cropping up in the course of conversation many years after, I was reminded that she had married a Mr. Thistlethwayte, and was further informed

that this “prodigal daughter” had become an earnest and fervent preacher, that at her tea-table it was her “custom” frequently “of an afternoon” to welcome several eminent, staid, and learned individuals, receiving with especial favour a certain great orator and statesman, who could, when he saw fit, be “all things to all men,” and most things to most women, if only they were his rapt admirers. How many wonderfully gifted personages have we not, all of us, known who could pardon everything in those that worshipped much.

After this time followed “Cora Pearl,” and later “Agnes Willoughby,” afterwards Mrs. Windham, married to the eccentric heir to large estates, including Felbrigg Hall, Norfolk, who ended by driving the Norwich coach and taking the regulation “tips” from the passengers. I sat behind him on one occasion during a short run about Norfolk (somewhere in the ‘sixties of last century, I fancy) when going to Felixstowe. Windham spoke a Norfolk dialect, intelligible only to the guard, ostlers, and natives with whom he might enter into conversation. Having been told that this was *the* Windham that had been at Eton (I did not in the least remember him, so perhaps he was my junior), I gradually led up to topics familiar to both of us, when, to my surprise, he at once entirely dropped the character of a countrified coachman and talked about “old times” and many persons known as boys to both of us.

“Do you remember a good-looking chap called Tom Wirlston?” he asked. I purposely change the name.

“Yes, I did.

“He went up to Cambridge, didn’t he?” inquired Windham.

“That’s the man,” I returned. “We were very good friends then, and he became a member of the A.D.C., our acting club”—Windham nodded—“but I only remember

him playing one part, and we lost sight of each other in our last year when we were both reading."

"Ah, well," said Windham, "he was a very handsome fellow—fine grown man—I don't know if you'd like to see him now."

"Yes, I should, very much. Is he anywhere within range?" I asked.

Windham indicated with his whip a small park in the near distance, and then said—

"If you like to get down now and walk across that field, you'll come right on to the lodge. I've got to bait for a few minutes, then pull up this long hill and gently down on t' other side, so I can give you a good half-hour. You'll find our old friend sadly changed, I fear; but remember me to him, and say, when I can get a day off I'll call round."

So down we got, I and my travelling companion.

True enough there was our old friend, delighted to see us, but such a wreck of a man in so few years! If I am correct in my dates, this visit was well on in the 'sixties, and we had not met since we were quite lads together at Trinity. We—Fred. Wilson was my companion—wished him well most heartily, and he was sufficiently collected, during the very few minutes we stayed with him, to refer to the past, and to tell us of the numerous improvements he intended to make on his estates when he was "about again."

Poor fellow! he never was "about again," as not long after this he died.

We were both silent as we walked out. Presently I uttered what was uppermost in my mind as I asked Frederick Wilson, "After the butler had pointed out this short cut to us, you stopped to talk to him. What did he tell you?"

Fred. Wilson shook his head gravely as he replied—

"You saw that man who was in his bedroom?"

"Yes, busy about the medicines and things; his valet, wasn't it?"

"No,—*his keeper.*"

"Good Heaven!"

Wilson went on: "There was another within call just on the other side of the door."

"But why did they let us see him?"

"He had heard the bell; it was his one quiet moment; our names were read to him from the card you sent up, and he seemed so suddenly delighted, so momentarily changed, that they felt our visit might be productive of good. But his man whispered to me," continued Fred. Wilson, "as we went out, that the lull was ending, and that in another second he would be raving!"

We found the coach, and gave Windham the information.

"He's booked," said Windham, with a big sigh, and it was a long time before we tried to start a subject of conversation. Then—after a while—having shown himself a sympathising, kind, and tender-hearted friend, and having "played the gentleman"—that is, as I believe, "been himself" in "his original part"—for so long, he suddenly threw care and refinement to the winds, exchanged some coarse chaff with the passers-by, laughed with the guard, used the most outlandish expressions, whipped up his team, and took us up to the inn in fine style, when, after having thrown the reins to an ostler and descended from his driving-seat, he with a true coachman-like touch of the hat and in broad county-tongued dialect, said, "Good-day, sir," and accepted his two crowns as a tip from us; and when we subsequently encountered him among his boon companions at the inn he did not bestow upon us any further recognition nor appear to be anything else but a rough, jolly sort of loud-voiced, easy-drinking, country driver of the Norfolk coach.

This Norfolk-Windham episode has carried me far ahead,

yet as it is the interval between Eton and the University, an *intermezzo* concerning personages connected with both places being permissible, I will return for a while to town and collect some fugitive memories.

I remember elegant Carlotta Grisi the dancer as a dazzling equestrienne in the Row, but I never saw her on the stage, as she danced at Her Majesty's, while, as I have already said, my father was a staunch Covent Gardenite. And so I only heard of Marie Taglioni and the other celebrated ballerini who executed the far-famed *pas de quatre*. What I knew of this dance I learnt only from the imitations given in a Princess's pantomime of a somewhat later date by Flexmon, the clown and ballet-master. But though Fanny Elssler, Perrot, Taglioni, Carlotta Grisi were only names to me (as a boy, I remember I was as utterly astonished at Carlotta Grisi's being able to ride, and actually cantering about in the Row, just as any pretty lady might have done, one of my own cousins, for example, and with nice people, too, as was innocent Mr. Pickwick when Sergeant Buzfuz wished Sergeant Snubbin "a good morning"), yet I have—*moi qui parle*—I have had a long conversation with Taglioni—but it was when she was Madame La Marquise, or La Marchesa, of something or other, French or Italian—I forget which, and when introduced to her at the house of Mr. Frederick Lablache, son of the Great and Big Lablache, I found myself sitting on a sofa next to a funny little shrivelled-up but most vivacious old lady, who was quite ready and willing to entertain me with the story of her life. Yes, I met Taglioni when, indeed, "her dancing days were over." But she was instructing pupils; so I presume the Marquisate, or whatever the title might have been, was not worth its weight in gold.

My experiences of the "Fast Life" of London began and ended early. The great difference between "then" and "now," that is, as far as I can ascertain anything concerning

the present time "from information received," seems to me to be in the hours kept. The "Early Closing Act" of 1872 not only put an end to places of so-called "entertainment" in the Metropolis as were of no sort of benefit to anyone save the proprietors and their employés, but also closed the doors of "Evans's Supper Rooms," where admirably performed old English glees, and good songs by professional choristers, provided a concert lasting from nine until past one, which was a delight to those who, after dining at their club or *en garçon* at "The Piazza Coffee-House," "The Cock Tavern," "Simpson's" in the Strand, or elsewhere within easy distance of Covent Garden, preferred spending an evening after the fashion of King Cole, with their tobacco, their glass, and a Welsh rarebit to finish with, to patronising any theatrical or other "show" that attracted so many others. Purged of the so-called "comic songs," of the propriety of which there could never for one instant have arisen any question, so gross were they and so devoid even of such wit as Lord Rochester's poems may be allowed to possess, Evans's, under Paddy Green, before the fatal innovation of admitting ladies to the half dozen private boxes in the new building, was quite a haven of rest, "far from the madding crowd" that thronged the supper-rooms and saloons, to those who dearly loved old English glees and madrigals, performed, as were done the chops, steaks, and potatoes, to perfection. Here, occasionally, came Thackeray, though more often he patronised the Cider Cellars, or remained in the smoking-room of the Garrick close at hand; here came, now and again, Charles Dickens; and on a Wednesday night a majority of the *Punch* staff, with Mark Lemon, would gather about the table in the corner, just to the right of the platform, on which the piano stood. I am now describing the old room as I first knew it during my Eton holidays and during the earlier part of my Cambridge days. In spite of the

multiplication of clubs, of theatres, of supper-places, restaurants, and hotels, I maintain that a revival of Evans's, just as it was in the old days, exceptionally licensed, to remain open until 1.30 a.m., "ladies not admitted" on any pretext whatever, an entertainment being given under responsible management, and the whole affair being strictly and properly conducted on high-class lines as to musical entertainment, and refreshments at moderate charges, including such suppers as could be provided at a "grill," I say I maintain that such a "revival of the fittest" would be, not only a great success as a place of resort, but a still greater success as a commercial speculation. The *sine qua non* is a genial, courtly, clever man of the world, a man who would be "a host in himself," present every evening to welcome the visitors and to bid them, individually, welcome, displaying a well-simulated interest in their particular and immediate wants and requirements. London life would not be worse for the revival of the palmy days of "Evans's," without the most objectionable element of the so-called "comic song." One constant figure about town at Evans's, and at other resorts of a less exclusive character, was Sergeant Ballantine, who, with a "pewter" in his hand, his hat well forward over his forehead, and his legs stretched out wide apart, would sit, apparently absorbed in the glees, occasionally chatting with Paddy Green, but rarely joining the jovial party that gathered round the small corner table, carefully reserved for Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks, "Pony" Mayhew, Thackeray, Sir Charles Taylor, Andrew Arcedeckne, who with, occasionally, John Leech, Albert Smith, the Broughs, Buckstone, and several other notables, literary and dramatic, would contrive to look in here, four evenings out of six, and to be welcomed by the amiable snuff-taking Paddy, as among his "Dear Boys, Dear Boys." There was a *siffleur*, one Herr von Jöel, "retained on the establishment on account of his

long services " (Heaven knows what they were !), who, in a shabby alpaca coat, very dingy shirt collar and wristbands, used to hand round cigars in a tumbler, and held himself always in readiness to take a turn on the stage with his imitation of birds, which he had brought to considerable perfection.

The Coal Hole and the Cider Cellars I have mentioned. At the former sat Judge Nicholson and his court, trying cases quite " unfit for publication," in which he was assisted by one Brooks, " The Protæan Witness," and the solemn way in which the judge would stop a case, in order to address the jury (*i.e.* the visitors who had paid so much a head as entrance fee), and " direct " them " to give their orders, as the waiter was in the room," was something not easily forgotten.

In those days too there was a considerable amount of public, and quasi-public, dancing going on, not only at such places as " The Hanover Square Rooms " and at the rooms in St. James's Street (the name escapes me), where such fashionable reunions as " The Caledonian Ball " and similar " dances " were held on certain comparatively state occasions, but there was dancing at Vauxhall, at Cremorne, at the Surrey Gardens, at the Princess's Rooms, and so forth. And in places of less *ton* were given " ballet balls " and dances, while teachers of dancing, as was Mrs. Selby in Soho, would give dances to which their pupils, principally female, could bring their friends at so much a head, refreshments and supper included. These were semi-respectable and of mixed class ; and many quite respectable, entirely the middle-class of fairly well-to-do shop girls and so forth, perhaps answering in a certain way to what at one time were the *grisettes* of Paris. Nowadays there are no *grisettes*, though *la vie de Bohème* of *Mürger* will always be found in all great cities where art attracts the youthful student.

Of all quietly superior dancing places Willis's (not "Willis's Rooms," which was quite another affair), better known as "Frere's," near Langham Church, and, as I fancy, in the street just at the back of Foley Street (known also as the "Foley Rooms"), was the best, and to the *habitués* as to the novice the most amusing and most attractive. "Folly Rooms" instead of "Foley" would have been the more appropriate title. The dances were held twice a week, and it wasn't everybody who could get an invitation. Oh, dear, no! not even if as a gentleman you should pay five-and-sixpence for a ticket and three-and-sixpence for the lady or several three-and-sixpences for the lady and her lady friends. How unbending they were, these ladies, in the height of fashion too, and such aristocratic names, which indeed not a few of their cavaliers, elderly or youthful, bore by right. And how the time flew by and the dances, always directed by Mr. Frere, a very quiet and most highly respectable personage, neither obtrusive nor obsequious, but quite ready to deal summarily and in a most tactful manner with any lady of title whose head was unaccustomed to the peculiar vintage of champagne as supplied on these occasions! The Army and the Bar were sufficiently represented, and in vacation times came a sprinkling from the universities, though for the most part the undergrads and the "two year old" men of that period cared less for the gay and giddy waltz, the very much overdone polka, and the wild galop (how wild! mad!), than for a quiet turn of "the Fancy" at "Bob Crofts" in the Haymarket, or at "Nat Langham's" or "Professor Harrison's," at all of which places the coming prize-fights were discussed, bets were made, and dogs were backed to kill so many rats in so many minutes. Of gambling places I rarely heard. Crockford's was a thing of the past, and only one place do I remember as being considered in an inferior way its successor; and I am not sure if the rooms

where I remember a fast young friend of mine losing a heap of money did not belong to the *Oriental Club* in that block of buildings in Waterloo Place which was subsequently the German Reeds' delightful *Gallery of Illustration*. The Oriental and the Raleigh Clubs were here, I fancy, at one time, but I am by no means sure.

Yes, I saw a great deal of this sort of London life before I went up to Cambridge, and in a very short space of time, but I delighted to get away to the country, and revelled in preparing for matriculation *chez* Mr. Thompson of Blackborough, Collumpton, Devonshire; and when compelled to be in London I did not care to upset the arrangements at home, where important changes had taken place, and so stopped about with friends in the country, occasionally taking a spell during vacation at Long's or Limmer's, which latter was then a house of call for sportsmen, where everything was rough and ready, except the payments, with its dark oak seats and tables, its big old-fashioned fireplace, and its sanded floor.

But I find I am in advance by a couple of terms of my university career. So now the next step is up to Trinity College, Cambridge, when I was just seventeen and three quarters, *i.e.* in October 1854, looking forward to my eighteenth birthday, the 29th of the following month. That is a date I can fix exactly.

And how delightful it was! What a sense of freedom! But now a boy from Eton, now a "freshman" like Pendennis, Foker, and my other Thackerayan heroes. There was something in the name of my tutor that was a good omen; he was the Rev. "Mr. Thacker!" Two-thirds of Thackeray in name; but if I expected from this some resemblance to the great novelist, I was doomed to complete disappointment. Except in kindness of manner, he was as unlike W. M. T. as possible.

I went through my "matriculation" (a mere farce of examination, as I had already paid my fees, signed my name, and become to all intents and purposes a "Trinity man"), and then came the question of rooms "in college or out of college?"

The love of freedom I had acquired since quitting Eton was strong within me. To be "*in college*" was to be all among tutors, masters, governors! "My soul should not be fettered!" nor my body, any more than I could help. And so "*Vive la liberté!*" this to myself as I replied sedately, "Sir, I think a friend of mine has bespoken rooms for me."

This was a statement not entirely void of foundation. I *had* seen an Eton friend who had advised me to live out of college; and I had seen another Etonian who informed me of capital rooms over a grocer's shop in Trinity Street, just opposite Trinity Gate.

"Your friend's name," inquired my tutor.

I was a bit nervous lest on hearing it Mr. Thacker should pull a long face, shake his head, and frowningly negative the proposition.

"His name, sir, is—ahem—Norman."

Now just at that minute, always having an unfortunate trick of memory when anything dramatic was concerned, it occurred to me that this sounded uncommonly as if I had intended commencing a parody on the celebrated declamatory speech,

"My name is—Norval,"

and had I clearly seen that to continue the lines would have ingratiated me with the Rev. Mr. Thacker, senior tutor and Fellow of Trinity, I believe I should have continued the recitation, adapting it to the existing circumstances.

However, I was not called upon for this extra contribution to my matriculation, as Mr. Thacker, after referring to a book,

observed that Mr. Norman was going "to keep" (that was the university phrase) at Moore's, which as I had rightly said was just opposite Trinity.

"Let me know how you get on," said my tutor, bowing me out. "I will send for you to-morrow, and decide as to the lectures which you will attend."

So I descended the narrow stone staircase, went to the porter's, sent for my luggage, and within an hour was installed in my "freshman's rooms"—"bachelor's quarters," only, in the university sense I was not a "bachelor"—with Henry John Norman, of the eminent banking firm, below, and for a neighbour upstairs, Glyn Vivian, both Etonians and both my seniors at college by quite a couple of terms. "So I came into their life!" And my landlord, sharp-eyed, sprightly, bald-headed, and energetic in his groceries was John or Henry Voce Moore, who in 1899 was elected Lord Mayor of London. His health! Had I but known the dignity in store for him I might in cap and gown (not bells) have addressed him in prophetic spirit, and said in the Witching-Macbethian style,

"Voce Moore thou art! and shall be much Moore hereafter! Hail, Moore the Mayor! Elected *unâ Voce!*"

But it is rather late to think of this now. The Worshipful ex-Mayor and I cannot return to old Cambridge days, and I do not suppose that either of us would wish to do so even if we could. At all events, I don't, not to any days except one exception, but that is a secret, not *de Polichinelle* but *entre moi et moi même*. "Voce Moore" is a peculiar name, and I gather from an answer given me by Sir William Jameson Soulsby, the Lord Mayor's private secretary, that Sir John Voce Moore and my good landlord at Cambridge are identical.

With what a marvellous equipment of classics did an ordinary Etonian of my day go up to the university, especially the youth who having benefited, temporarily, by the

laborious skill of " eminent translators," was, in one respect, like the ox of Scripture that " knoweth his master's ' crib ' ! " As to mathematics, to paraphrase the well-known saying concerning an eminent scholar, to the effect that " what he didn't know was not worth knowing," I may apply it to myself with just one alteration, and that is of " didn't " into " did," and making the "*did*" emphatic. In this respect I was neither better nor worse than the " vast majority " who came up from Eton, and I find my personal experience corroborated by that of such of my *æquales* as have written on the subject, and by that of others somewhat anterior to me. However, " ignorance is bliss," and we were certainly uncommonly happy. As for me, I have been able to support existence without the " props " thoughtfully provided by Euclid.

I was soon in the regular course of chapels, lectures, and halls. There were then two " chapels " a day, the first early (whether seven or eight, I forget), and the other at six p.m. Dinner in hall was at that time at what I considered the curious hour of four ; a time that, when I came to devote myself to " read " (being thereto compelled in order to pass examinations either in college or subsequently for Little-Go and then for Degrees) I found uncommonly well chosen and decidedly convenient. To breakfast at eight, " grind " from nine till one, take some very light refreshment, nothing more solid than soup, and then to go out for exercise, walking or riding, from 1.30 to 3.30, is a preparation that will make anyone perfectly ready for a good square meal at four ; and, by six o'clock, after cigar, or pipe, and coffee, he will be fit as a fiddle to " grind " again from six until 9.30, when something consoling to drink, something light and digestible to eat, a modicum of tobacco while chatting or playing a game of *écarté* with a chum, will finish the working day ; after which, to bed

at eleven. Continue like this through life—ahem!—and virtue will be rewarded by good health and a perfect capacity for enjoying everything.

“Good health” failed me within a very short time from my first appearance at Trinity, the consequence being that I found myself a prisoner in my rooms, devoting my time to developing my talents in a department of literature which I had commenced at Eton with the farce I had written for performance in “pupil-room.”¹ To this I devoted

¹ Of this farce I have already given the *cast* as originally played at my tutor’s at Eton. Here is the bill as it was subsequently performed “under the immediate patronage” of my father, who was staying at the time at my Uncle George’s house at Worthing. How the novelty was received, or how it was played I never knew. I was “innocent of the knowledge” until after the event, but whether the audience did “applaud the deed” or not no one informed me, and at that time I had no idea that this sort of thing “got into the papers.” Blissful state! Here is the “bill of the play”:—

THEATRE ROYAL, WORTHING.

*Licensed according to Act of Parliament to Mr. Edward Snewin,
Builder, Market Street.*

Sole Lessee . . . MR. CHARLES PLUNKETT.

By Desire

And under the immediate Patronage of

F. BURNAND, Esq.,

On which occasion that gentleman has kindly favoured Mr. PLUNKETT
with an entirely New Farce (never acted), entitled

GUY FAWKES DAY.

On FRIDAY EVENING, September 8th,

When will be performed Sheridan’s beautiful Comedy,

THE RIVALS.

Then follows the cast with “Mr. CHARLES PLUNKETT (first time), Sir Anthony Absolute,” and “Mrs. CHARLES PLUNKETT as Lydia Languish.”

Dance . . . Mr. J. P. WESTON.

A Comic Song . . . Mr. G. H. BRANDON.

all my time. My name being on the sick-list, dropped out of the lecture list, and I was left in peace where tutors ceased from troubling. During this time, I being "ægro-

To conclude with the New Farce, entitled

GUY FAWKES DAY.

Mr. Soapeton	Mr. SYMONDSON.
Mr. Tickleton (his cousin) . .	Mr. J. PARRY.
Cracks (a swell-mobsman) . .	Mr. KINGSTON.
Buttons (a page)	Mr. G. H. BRANDON.
John (a footman)	Mr. J. P. WESTON.
A Detective	Mr. BUTLER.
Mrs. Soapeton	Miss KATE THOMAS.

PRICES OF ADMISSION.—Lower Boxes, 3s. ; Upper Boxes, 2s. ; Upper Private Boxes, 2s. 6d. Second Price to Dress Boxes, 2s. ; Upper do., 1s. 6d. ; Upper Private do., 2s. ; Pit, 1s. ; Gallery, 6d. No half-price to Pit or Gallery.

The Doors will be opened at Seven o'clock. Curtain to rise at Half-past Seven.

Tickets to be obtained at Miss Carter's Library, or at Mr. Paine's Printing Offices, Chapel Road. The Box Plan may be seen and places secured at the Theatre from Eleven till Two.

Leader of the Band	Mr. HEWETT.
Scenic Artist	Mr. WALL.
Acting and Stage Manager . .	Mr. JOHN PARRY.

PAINE, PRINTER, WORTHING.

"There is no date to that, is there, sir?" inquired a juror in the Pickwick trial. And with the learned Sergeant Buzfuz I reply, "There is no date, gentlemen." I fancy it must have been about 1852 or 1853, as I should say we boys had performed the piece (which had been printed at Windsor) in my tutor's (Cooke's) pupil-room in 1852, or it may have been in the early part of 1853. Anyway, this, my first piece, was in print and acted by professionals when I was about fifteen years old.

tat," was provided with dinner from "the kitchens," and so it came about that, during my first term, I only attended in "hall"—it wasn't very "merry in hall," where very few "beards wagged"—just at its commencement and at its finish. I "kept" my term, as I found out afterwards, greatly to my satisfaction, with remarkable ease and comfort. But these "little dinners," *chez moi*, involved me in extra hospitality, for which it was necessary to obtain dishes from Lichfield's, who was the *restaurateur* of that period. Lichfield, a jovial old soul, kept a kind of restaurant, not three minutes' walk from our door: it was most convenient for hunting men who arrived too late for hall, and for most who preferred dining at a later hour than that of their college, whichever it might be. Some cheerful spirits preferred dining at "The Hoop" or "The Bull," but, on the whole, Lichfield's was the favourite haunt of the very much up-to-date young men of that period. The feeding was not great but good: English, not French, and indeed, very few of us, just one here and there, could lay any claim to being in the slightest degree a *gourmet*. Personally, I knew but one, and he was "a wise young man," superior in classic lore and in English scholarship, to anyone, I might almost venture to say, of his own age and standing. This was Maurice Fitzgerald, younger brother of Gerald, who had come up as a Fellow-Commoner of Trinity. They were the sons of the very eccentric Mr. Fitzgerald, of Boulge Hall, Norfolk, brother of that Edward Fitzgerald whose memory is nowadays cherished by all students of Omar Khayyam. I do not remember ever to have seen their uncle Edward, but of his eccentric brother John, the squire of Boulge Hall, I heard so much that when he once came up to Trinity College, Cambridge, in search of his "two dear boys," who were supposed to be "stopping up" during the Christmas vacation "to read," I took the

greatest possible care to keep out of his way. The Fitzgeralds were all eccentric, and I should say that my good friend Maurice was in many ways not unlike his amiable uncle. Both were thorough students, loving literature "for itself alone"; both were shy, both wrote well and with scholarly finish, both were sufficiently rich to have no need to use the pen except as amateurs, and whether their works realised money or not was a matter of as little moment to the nephew as it had been to the uncle. In one point I am sure they differed. Maurice, "the young Mauritius," as George Meredith used afterwards to style him, had no sympathy whatever with that parsimonious, philosophic, bibulous, crusty, unfriendly renegade from the Mohammedan creed and practice, Omar ibn Ibrabim el Khayyami, whose occasional bursts into poetry have, by the exertions of the aforesaid Edward Fitzgerald, been preserved for English readers, of whom a certain select few have founded an Omar Khayyam admiration society which constitutes itself once a year, I believe, into a very pleasant and most convivial dinner-party—

" 'Omar Khayyam !' let the toast pass,
I warrant 'twill prove an excuse for the glass."

Undemonstrative in manner, quiet in his life, a first-rate whist-player, and a great lover of the game at cards, which was *par excellence* the evening amusement of *our* time at the university, not caring much, if at all, for sports and pastimes, Maurice Purcell Fitzgerald was a genuine student of literature, ancient and modern, and could turn out polished epigrams in Greek and Latin, could write elegant prose and satirical verse with the greatest ease. I firmly believe that, had he so chosen, he could have taken a double first in classics, and for the matter of that could have with ease have become scholar and fellow of his college. I fancy

my friend, George Meredith, who was one of Maurice's most intimate friends for some years after leaving the university, would be of the same opinion. George Meredith took him as the model of his "Wise Youth" in *Richard Feverel*, at least, unless I am very much mistaken. However, at the time when we, Maurice and I, were undergraduates together, we had no knowledge of the distinguished novelist, whose name was hardly known but to the youth, wise or foolish, of the university.

In my first term Maurice and I met only occasionally, but I soon came to know his brother Gerald, who was my senior by some terms, and who was delighted with my proposition that a theatrical party should be given in my rooms (my companions, Norman and Vivian, sharing as "givers of the feast"), when it was arranged that a play of mine, written for the occasion, should be presented to our assembled guests. Such an idea was an absolute novelty. But there was a difficulty as to getting the female rôle adequately filled. Fortunately for our performance, there was among our acquaintance a young freshman, Arthur Cumberlege, whose manner of speaking and whose faculty of imitation pointed him out as the very youth for the male representative of a female character. So he was selected to be "on the spindle side" in my farce, while Llewellyn, myself, and, I rather fancy, Gerald Fitzgerald filled the other rôles. But of Fitzgerald I am not at all sure. My friend Norman's room on the first floor, being a very fair size, was to be the theatre, and here a carpenter, one Lovett, a tall, heavy man of gipsy-like appearance, with heavy brows, long black beard, whiskers, and moustache (a sort of respectable "Maypole Hugh" in *Barnaby Rudge*), was engaged to rig up a stage with all appliances complete. The rehearsals, of course, were excellent fun, entailing innumerable convivial meetings for "business."

And it *was* a party ! As many undergraduates as could be crammed in were invited, and, being invited, brought friends. The bedrooms were used as dressing-rooms for the actors ; the orchestra was supplied by "white-headed Bob," on the violin, and his two companions, with harp and cornet-à-piston respectively. This band did a very good business in the university ; the *trio* played all the popular tunes ; and having practised by day never required to play "from notes" at night. They were accustomed to being shoved into small bedrooms, to sitting on narrow landings, and on still narrower staircases, and were perfect Mark Tapleys in finding themselves jolly in the most straitened circumstances—as far as space went—contented with whatever might be collected for them by the host "going round" to his guests "with the hat" for subscriptions. Of course the host himself always subscribed liberally ; but that was how *our* harmony was provided for us in those delightful old Bohemian university days.

Tea and coffee were served before the overture was rung in, and having been cleared away during the performance, our back room (a long one placed at our disposal that evening by our good landlord, Mr. Voce Moore, who, bless him, had no sort of idea either as to the proportions or as to the character the entertainment would assume) was so cleverly arranged by emissaries from Lichfield's with a long table and a couple of small ones as to seat a considerable number, and to accommodate altogether about fifty guests. The performance began at eight or thereabouts. It "went"—how it went !! Arthur Cumberlege, as the lady in the farce, was a prodigious success, mainly perhaps on account of the novelty and absurdity of an undergraduate figuring in female attire. Llewellyn was very serious, I remember that, and couldn't find his spectacles, without which, to refresh his memory, by reading his part in a quiet corner, was impossible. Henry

Norman was the prompter, wedged into a very warm corner, and as he unfortunately when nervous invariably stuttered (a defect comparatively unnoticed at our go-as-you-please rehearsals, and quite lost sight of when we were "letter-perfect"), he could be of no assistance whatever to the unfortunate Llewellyn, who had at the very opening of the play to be "heard outside" exclaiming, "What! Your master not at home, you say," and then to enter, *à la cantonade*, followed by the servant (Fitzgerald), who stared at him helplessly, but for the life of him was unable to "give him the word." Poor Norman was struggling with an attempt at utterance, and I, the author, was in an agony at the wing. Immense laughter and applause greeted this unexpected "situation," which was intensified on my shouting out his first line to him, when his memory suddenly returned, just as Norman, thus assisted, blurted out the words, and not only these but the remainder of the speech. After that, the audience being in tiptop good humour, everything went smoothly; Llewellyn found his spectacles when he made his first *exit*; and on his *rentrée* he was "as a giant refreshed with wine."

A great success that night was Arthur Cumberlege as *Mrs. Peter Blossom* (I was Peter, and as one of the hosts and the writer of the play received what is politely termed "a hearty recognition"), who at his first appearance was greeted with cheers, laughter, and great applause. He could affect mincing manners, but his build was somewhat ungainly for a "leading lady." The landlord came upstairs, and pathetically begged anybody he could get to listen to him "to tell them not to make such a noise, as he was certain it would attract the proctors." However, the noise subsided; the players, triumphant, retired to their dressing-rooms, the guests were invited by Norman and Vivian (representing the firm of tenants) to commence supper; and they did.

Ah! those were the days for supper! They couldn't sing—

“ We are the boys
Who make no noise
In the merry uni-ver-si-tee.”

For the majority there was about just an hour and a half in which to sup. All who were “in college” had to be back on the stroke of midnight for fear of being “gated,” and so being done out of many a pleasant evening during the next week. Others, being in lodgings, could cut it rather fine and get in about 12.15 without being reported, though their landlord would receive them with an ominous shake of the head and an intimation that this was the last occasion he could allow the rule to be broken. A few men, and these the rowdiest, either belonged to Magdalene College, where licence was the order of the day and disorder of the night, or “kept” in rooms where no questions were asked and where the landlord only now and then found that he must save his “licence” by sacrificing his lodger—that is, when the lodger had been for some time “too greatly daring.” On this occasion all these varieties of gownsmen were represented, and we had also among the party some jovial Bachelors and two or three Masters of Arts, who were “stop-ping up” either for their own amusement and nothing else, or under the delusion that they were reading for the theological examination. Added to these there were some friends from London, absolutely irresponsible. By 11.30 bowls of punch were going round, tobacco was in full blow, songs, or rather choruses, were being sung, stories were being told, and in a generally mixed way eating, drinking, talking, singing, and smoking were all going on simultaneously, when, the uproar being at its height and the three hosts beginning to wish their guests well clear of the place, the door opened and at it appeared the bald head and pale but determined

visage of our now justly incensed landlord. "Gentlemen ! gentlemen !" he commenced, but what he would have said has never been ascertained, as at that supreme moment a great shout went up, three cheers were given for "the stranger" who had so suddenly appeared "within our gates," and some one strewed, not "vine leaves," after Ibsenitish fashion, but lettuce leaves accompanied by their concomitant salad dressing, on his devoted head, or rather would have done so but that, in the twinkling of an eye, Mr. Moore dodged, "went down cleverly" as it were "to avoid punishment," and banging the door behind him disappeared, descending the stairs just as the clock of Trinity boomed out midnight ; and then—*saute qui peut*—everyone at hazard taking any cap, any gown, and any hat, then rushing off, tumbling over one another pell-mell downstairs and out at the door (which had been previously opened by our astute landlord) into Trinity Street, across the road, and inside the college gates with the very last stroke of the hour.

But our party was not yet finished. The Bachelors, the friends from town, and the Masters of Arts were still convivial. One Master of Arts was, thank goodness, still in possession of his "faculties," I rather fancy he was Junior Dean of King's, while another master, a "Johnian," I think (a dear, good, excellent fellow, who subsequently passed his examination after reading at the Theological College at Wells), was so hopelessly intoxicated that he had slipped under the table, and was not found until we happened to be looking for something or other. The sober Junior Dean, above referred to, interviewed, pacified, and reasoned with our landlord, who, being of a kindly disposition, consented to overlook the whole affair, unless, of course, the university authorities, under whom he held his licence, and on whom he in every way depended, should take cognisance of what

had been an exceptional disturbance. So the party broke up, and only the three tenants, ourselves, with our amiable Master of Arts and his two friends from town, were left quite exhausted to regard the scene of havoc. Glasses smashed, punch-bowls cracked, everything topsy-turvy, confusion hopeless, and *then* we found that we had still one other guest remaining, and that was Tom Tuppen, M.A.,—that was *not* his name, but no matter, 'twill serve,—fast asleep and snoring under the table.

We lugged him up to one of our spare rooms ; we pinched him, we hit him, we dubbed him down on the bed. No, he only grunted : nothing could wake him. Then the Junior Dean gravely suggested, “ Let’s cork him ! ” as if he were a bottle. But the Junior Dean had an eye for colour, and it was “ burnt cork ” he meant. So burnt cork was produced, and the process was commenced. It was not artistically successful, and it was given up when about a third of his face was smudged. Then, after carefully removing the looking-glass, our Junior Dean went to his college, and we left Tom Tuppen, M.A., alone in his glory. Then all went to bed.

How the next morning that unhappy Tom Tuppen ever reached his rooms, which were a long way off, none of us ever learned. When we went to look for him he had gone. We didn’t see him again for months—not, indeed, until the summer term when he came up to finish his reading, but he never alluded to “ the night of the party ” except as a very pleasant evening that he had spent with us ; and, as our landlord was silent on the subject, our theory was that Mr. Voce Moore had fortunately encountered Tom on the stairs in the early morning and had given him every opportunity of setting himself *white* again with the world before he went out to face it in Trinity Street. Perhaps, too, he was a little uncertain as to how the black got there. Had he

done it himself? Anyway, no more was ever heard of it, and, as may be imagined, no questions were asked by us. But Mr. Voce Moore, as I imagine, did not shed tears when, after that term, I migrated to Green Street, where I lived happily ever afterwards.

CHAPTER IX

AN EXTINCT RACE — UPWARE REPUBLIC —
DOWNING COLLEGE — PECULIAR — WINES —
THEATRES — PAST AND PRESENT — REFER-
ENCE — DR. GUEST — HIGH - CHURCHISM —
SIMEONITES — ACTORS — HORTON RHYS — HIS
COMPANY — *ABSITS* — *EXEATS* — STARTING

THERE was a set up at the university about this time composed of hard riding men, hard hitting and fighting men, hard drinking men, and "hard and fast" living men, the like of whom I had never seen and only heard of before, and certainly have never come across since they vanished. They were not exactly young men as undergraduates go; some of them had been up and gone down and come up again (like drowning men, who perhaps had better have "gone under" at once and there an end), some had postponed taking their degree, some had been once plucked and were twice shy, but, taken altogether, they were the slangiest, rowdiest, rudest, worst-languaged, fortuitous concourse of university atoms, coming from various colleges, that could be found at any time in a "seat of learning." Of this sort Magdalene College was then head centre, to which, as a kind of Liberty Hall, not a few men, for whom the restraint of Trinity was irksome, had migrated.

I remember the names and personality of every one of these Mohawks, with whom my, apparently, open defiance

of the authorities—a defiance calculated with considerable caution—in starting a dramatic club at the Hoop Hotel, put me at once on excellent terms, and who felt towards me as in some sort a kindred spirit.

These “young bloods,” as they would have been styled in a former generation, had formed themselves into a corporation entitled “The Upware Republic,” whose seat of government was at a place called Upware, on the river Cam, in a public-house (the sign of which I do not remember), where their parliament was held for the discussion of sporting matters, and the arrangements for “ratting” matches as a trial of terriers. Should a stranger enter the room of the Upware Re-public House while these debates, assisted by pipes and liquor, were in progress, he was at once requested to withdraw, or if he chose to remain he would be elected a member of the Upware Republic, on the sole condition of his then and there fighting the temporary champion! Should the candidate for membership prove victorious, he was received with open arms, elected unanimously, asked what he would take, and was “treated” by everyone, and there and then was empowered to hold the championship until deprived of it by some more lucky, or more skilled, pugilist. There was an entrance fee and a subscription, and the members were served with whatever the landlord ordinarily provided for their refreshment in the way of chops, steaks, liquor, and tobacco at something like two-thirds discount for cash, or whatever was the *reduction on taking a quantity*. The members also had the right of fishing and shooting in the fen country, and when there was a hard frost, and skating between Cambridge and Ely was in vogue, the palace of the Upware Republic was highly popular, and the rule as to strangers being compelled to fight the champion was somewhat, though not entirely, relaxed. The rules were printed, and I possessed a copy, which curi-

osity, I regret to say, I have lost. The Republic has long ago vanished, as have probably the majority of "choice spirits," all considerably my seniors, who boasted of membership and who, at different times, held office under the presidents who were elected annually. Among them were the best gentlemen jockeys, riders, and pugilists in the university. Not a few of them, once having quitted the university and broken with the Upwarian Republicanism, or rather republic-house-ism, distinguished themselves in various professions, including the ministry of the Church of England, and in the army, where one of the most devil-may-care of this set of very "peculiar people," known in the university, on account of his startlingly atheistic opinions, as "the Infidel," having entered a line regiment, after the militia, became not only a severe disciplinarian but also a preaching evangelical colonel, of the very highest character and the very strictest morals, a fighting member of militant Puritanism, who would have been dear to the heart of the sternest Cromwellians. Perhaps, "if to the rank of major-general" Shepherd Harvey (I do not guarantee the spelling as correct) subsequently rose, he may have become a very high churchman. Clearly, there were some roysterers of that rough-and-ready set to whom the Upware republic-house-ism did not do much harm. After all, this sort of thing was only a shortlived flash, shooting up from the flickering embers of the old "Tom-and-Jerry-boxing-the-watch" fires that were now rapidly dying out. But for a while it was certainly this sort of "life in London" revived, and I arrived at the university just in time to see about the last of it. The men who composed this "set" were characters, every one of them, and must have sat for their portraits as types to the author of *Cantabs*, a brochure illustrated by "Phiz," that made its appearance a little before my time, in company with two other similar publications entitled *Young Gentlemen*

and *Young Ladies*, which preceded Albert Smith's *Gents* and his other *Studies from Nature*.

The mention of these "eccentrics" reminds me of a few other men of the same type, but who stopped short of the Upware Republic. One was a genial young fellow and, as I believe, first-rate sportsman, whose name was Cayley—Digby Cayley—and his sobriquet "Cracker." How "Cracker Cayley" came by his nickname I never ascertained; it had been thrown at him, and had stuck like a burr. He had commenced at Trinity, but on account of his quiet and inoffensive proceedings not being in perfect harmony with the views of the Trinity dons as to what the model life of an undergraduate should be, the Cracker "went down to avoid punishment" (as probably he and his friends would have expressed it), and "came up" again "smiling" in all the glory of velvet and gold tasselled cap, full black gown braided with gold, that distinguished the Fellow-Commoner of Downing from all other members of the university. But still more distinguished was he by the fact of his unique position as at that time *the only undergraduate at Downing College!* It was an ideal and quite remarkable position. There were professors, deans, chaplains, and so forth, and of course a master, all living in Downing, and all therefore at the service of the one solitary undergraduate. At other colleges the master and authorities settled the hours of lecture, the times of public worship and of public feeding in hall. In all other colleges the master and the fellows suited the divisions of the day to their own convenience, and the undergraduates simply had to bow and accept their lordships' ruling. But at Downing it was not so. There the master, dons, chaplains, lecturers existed for the sake of the one undergraduate, and what *he* wished was their law. The "Gyp" (*i.e.* the undergraduate's college servant) would be sent in the morning by the chaplain to ask the fellow-

commoner Cayley "if he would like any chapel to-day?" and "if so, at what hour would it be convenient for him to attend divine service?" And "the Cracker," who had probably only "turned in" at Downing about two a.m., having arrived from some roystering supper party at the town residence of one of his former companions, at Trinity or some other college, would reply, from under the bed-clothes, curtly but decidedly; not indeed appointing any particular hour for the function, but simply dismissing the applicant with very brief but emphatic recommendations as to the direction in which the chaplain's emissary was to turn his steps. Subsequently his own "Gyp" would arrive and ask if there were any orders for "the kitchen" as to breakfast; and these being given, there would be handed in a polite note from the tutor, inquiring whether Mr. Cayley would be ready for lecture at such and such an hour, and if not, when? With the breakfast arrived a request from the chief cook, begging to be informed if Mr. Cayley intended to honour "hall" that day with his company at dinner, and, according to his answer, so provision was made accordingly.

If the above sketch is in the least degree a correct picture of the state of things at Downing College when all the world, I mean when all *my* world, was young, it will be admitted that Downing College, like "Charley Mount" in the Irish ballad, "was a pleasant place" to live in. I am not at all sure of my *facts*; but I am quite clear as to the tradition, concerning the charm of existence at Downing, that obtained at Trinity. For "the man from Downing" had to come a long way to see his friends and chums at Trinity, and round and about that centre which was the "hub of the univers"-ity, and needs must that he came, otherwise he would have been isolated, since not a youth from Trinity with a reputation to lose ever visited Downing; and to a considerable number

the very existence of such a college was unknown, while as "a local habitation and a name," it was, at the time of which I am speaking, associated in the minds of Trinity men chiefly with the style and title of "Cracker Cayley."

I have mentioned "wines," but in "my day" this fashion, as far as concerned Trinity, was fast dying out, and was yielding to late dinners and post-prandial conviviality; "wines," *i.e.* wine parties with fruit and cakes after hall were for babes among the freshmen; but breakfasts, *déjeûners à la fourchette* at so convenient an hour in the morning as would suit the not-much-reading man (for any hour would suit the "non-reading man"), and dinners and suppers became quite *de rigueur* during the three years and a half that I was up at Trinity. Suppers naturally followed on late rehearsals and performances at the A.D.C., of which I shall here treat briefly, having given the full history of that club "in another place."

It is with a smile of complacency that I can look back to those early days and remember how, very gradually, the "dons" discovered that it would be as well first of all to wink at the amateur dramatic performances, and then to thoroughly open their eyes to the fact that it would be far better to give them first of all their tacit acquiescence, and finally such open encouragement as was shown, practically, by tutors granting extension of leave after "closing hours" to men who had earned their refreshment by their labour on the A.D.C. boards. As among these were included "supers" and actors with only a few lines or even a line to speak, the list of names on the play-bill soon became a pretty long one. However, since the time which I am describing there are other dramatic clubs, and there is a theatre supplied by good provincial companies, whose performances are highly attractive to members of the university, who have now their reviews published during term time, containing, among all

the various university items of news, criticisms of both amateur and professional performances. I am not aware whether the theatre in the town is licensed by the municipal or university authorities or by both together; it exists, and obtains considerable patronage. Nor have I heard that anybody is "a penny the worse," as many certainly were when the old Barnwell theatre, in prehistoric times, was in existence.

As to the foundation and formation of the A.D.C., Cambridge, which has by this time become an institution, and which in due course will share the fate of all such institutions and either be improved off the face of the earth or be "cornered" by its own offspring (for of all the dramatic clubs at Cambridge, and at Oxford too for the matter of that, the A.D.C., Cambridge, was the Alma Mater), and left to expire of inanition, the whole account of it is given in some special "Reminiscences"¹ to which, if the work be extant (for I fancy the sale was limited to a couple of editions of some two thousand copies), I must refer my readers, only here pausing to remark that the account of my interview with the Vice-Chancellor, therein given, is absolutely true, and that my sketch of him personally, "as he appeared" on that occasion, is, making allowance for a farcical touch given to the entire interview (at a time when, by the way, "interviewing" was an unknown art in England), precisely as I saw him. I state this, as recently I have read a contradiction of my verbal portraiture of Dr. Guest, Vice-Chancellor, on whom I was bidden to call at Caius College. "Beyond the present interview," I wrote, "I know nothing of this excellent man," and I describe him as a short, wizened, dried-up elderly gentleman, with little legs and a big head,

¹ *Personal Reminiscences of the A.D.C., Cambridge.* London: Chapman & Hall. 1880.

like a serious Punch doll, wearing his academical cap, and with his gown hitched up under his elbows, which gave him the appearance of having recently finished a hornpipe before I came in. He had the fidgety air of a shortsighted person who has just lost his glasses.

Perhaps this wasn't the Vice-Chancellor; perhaps it was his *locum tenens*; but it was at the Vice-Chancellor's, Dr. Guest's, rooms that I had been commanded to appear, and the "don" who received me, and whose description I have given, was, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the Vice-Chancellor himself, Dr. Guest, Master of Caius, who availed himself of the chance of immortality offered him by inquiring, before granting his permission for the performance, "whether Cox and Box were Fellows of Trinity?"

The struggles the A.D.C. went through, all its difficulties and dangers up to the time when the Prince of Wales, now His Gracious Majesty King Edward VII., kindly accepted the presidency of the Club, are they not all written in the aforesaid work? "which when found make a note of."

One *spécialité* at the start of the A.D.C. was the wonderful impersonation by my friend, Frederick Collins Wilson, of the part of *Dinah* in the burlesque of *Villikins*. It absolutely took the audience by storm, and the chief honours of the three nights' entertainment undoubtedly fell to Wilson. Cumberlege, who had taken the "spindle side" in the private performance in my rooms already recorded, had disappeared; I fancy he left after my second term, but at all events the memory of his success was utterly wiped out by the veritable triumph of Wilson's *Dinah*, with songs and dances. Fred. Wilson was not in the least "fast": he was religious and intensely "high church," far and away in advance of anything that was at that time considered "high" at Cambridge, where "Puseyism" was

regarded by the majority as little more than a "fad" or an eccentricity in religion, just as had been looked upon Simeonism and ultra-evangelical practices in years gone by.

The nickname "Sim" was then still occasionally used to denote a sort of respectable "Stiggins," who would turn up his eyes and hold up his hands in horror at the mere mention of a dramatic performance, and who regarded theatres as temples of the devil.

But Fred. Wilson, who as a university man was of the quietest type possible, loved the drama; at home he was always for "character" and "dressing up," and was, naturally, a clever actor in a certain line. Undoubtedly his *forte* was the assumption of feminine character, and his youthful, slim figure, his not unhandsome face, of rather a Jewish cast, guiltless of whiskers (he shaved in obedience to the dictates of his artistic conscience), his delicate hands and peculiarly neat ankles, fitted him, beyond anyone else I ever remember to have seen on or off the A.D.C. boards, for the assumption of such petticoat parts as he consented to play. On referring to *Personal Reminiscences of the A.D.C.*, I find that Wilson's first appearance was as *Distaffina* in *Bombastes*, and the following term, when he appeared as *Dinah* in my burlesque of *Villikins*, the success was so great that we determined on following it up with another performance of three nights' duration at the end of the term in December, when, however, "one Mr. C. Digby" (F. C. Wilson) and "one Mr. Algernon," being unable to think of anything outside their reading for their degree, could not study any new parts.

There were up at Cambridge a few of us in whom the *cacoëthes agendi* was going at that time overpoweringly strong. It seized on Gerald Fitzgerald, my senior by nearly two years, on Charles Donne, also considerably my senior (staying up at the university until he had decided on his

profession), and Reginald Kelly of Trinity Hall, whose quaintness as a dry low comedian I remember as associated in my mind with the peculiarities of those inimitable actors, Keeley, Harley, Compton, and I may add "little Clarke of the Haymarket." In London, as it happened, I had been introduced by Paddy Green one night at Evans's to Captain Horton Rhys, who, under the name of Captain Morton Price, was an amateur of some distinction, travelling about the country with a small company of non-professionals playing for charities, local and otherwise, at various provincial theatres. As the times chosen for those performances were when such theatres as those of Bath, Cheltenham, Plymouth, and Leamington had just finished their pantomime season, and when, therefore, the managers were only too ready to welcome any "attraction" coming to them on favourable terms,—and the amateurs themselves took nothing save absolutely their temporary expenses (although I fancy Morton Price, like the equally well-known Captain Disney Roebuck, did not give himself all this trouble for merely "the fun of the thing"—at least so I subsequently ascertained),—the dates for several "shows" on a circuit were easily arranged; and when Captain Morton Price suggested that I might like to join him on tour and bring two or three of my A.D.C. companions, I accepted for myself. Subsequently Gerald Fitzgerald and Kelly gave in their adhesion. Horton Rhys had arranged to settle all dates and details, and in course of time he wrote to say that we should be required for a tour in the early spring season of 1856. The pieces were all arranged; the parts were sent to us; he gave us only a few days' notice, and the *rendezvous* was to be Limmer's Hotel,¹ London, whence we were to start for our

¹ Limmer's Hotel, with its snug bar and sanded floor, very different from what it is to-day, was the headquarters of sporting men and men about town. Jem Collins, the head waiter and mixer of "drinks,"

theatres. The gallant captain being himself quite independent (he had a good house, a charming wife and small family at Leamington, his head hunting quarters), simply gave the word autocratically, and expected us to come up to time with our *Box and Cox* (of course), *Charles the Second*, and one or two other pieces, including my own burlesque of *Villikins*, and always *The Waterman*, in which the captain himself, having a really good voice and a florid style that would have delighted a generation before the time of Sims Reeves, was to please everybody, including himself, by his rendering of "Did you never hear" and of sundry ballads, specially introduced to display the captain's musical ability. The opera of *The Waterman*, as I remember, consisted chiefly of the captain, who never seemed to be off the stage, and appropriated the songs of all the other parts if any one of us showed signs of nervousness or vocal incapacity.

Now, the facer for us was that these performances were fixed at Bath, Cheltenham, Leamington, Plymouth, Bristol, just when it was our "term time" at Cambridge, and when we, Reginald Kelly and myself, were bound to attend lectures and keep our term, he at Trinity Hall, I at Trinity. Fitzgerald at Trinity was not in quite the same case; he had a term to spare, having kept most of his up to that date.

Now, in those good old days, *absits* and *exeats*, which were, respectively, tickets-of-leave for a day, and for any length of time, were not so very difficult to obtain from one's tutor—if he were not asked too often.

Some undergraduates, so the legend went, killed their family off by degrees, at one time with mournful countenance (I remember the quotation, having heard it when quite a boy) celebrated in this verse to the air of *Jenny Jones*—

"My name is Jem Collins, head waiter at Limmer's,
The corner o' Conduit Street, Hanover Square,
An' my occipashun is sarvin' out brimmers
To such sportin' covies as chance to be there."

ance, asking for an *exeat* to visit a dying relative, at another, requesting to attend a grandmother's funeral in Scotland or Ireland. The only members of the family left alive were, of course, the parents ; but it is related how an artless youth, having exhausted all his relatives as an excuse, desiring an *exeat* in order to spend a few quiet days in London " unknown " to anyone, bethought him that his end would be gained if he approached his tutor in the garb of woe, with a most sorrowful countenance, and hardly able to sob out, " Please, sir, I—I—(sob)—want . . . an (sob) *exeat*—for "—

" Your father or mother ill ? " asked the sympathetic tutor. " I hope not."

The youth gasped out, struggling with his emotion—

" I'm—a—(sob)—fraid, sir, my poor, dear (sob sob) mother "—

When the tutor interrupted him with, " Really, Mr. So-and-so, that must be very sudden."

" O—ve—(sob)—ry—(sob) very ! "

" As," continued the tutor blandly, " I have only just received a letter from your father this morning, who writes evidently in excellent health, and talks of coming down here to-day to see how you are progressing, as he is not quite satisfied."

Imagine ! The artless undergraduate had there and then to assume a look of the most intense joy !

" So my mother (*beaming*) is not ill ? "

" Evidently not," replied the tutor. " Or your father wouldn't be leaving home. And, therefore, there will be no necessity for the *exeat*. On the contrary, you will meet your father at the station."

" Oh yes, sir—when—is— ? "

" The twelve train for town."

The youth bowed his acknowledgments, and was about to quit, when the tutor stopped him at the open door—

"Mr. So-and-so, I don't think I shall see my way to granting you any *absits* or *exeats* for some considerable time to come. You had better devote all your time to study, and then that will give the other unfortunate members of your family, the state of whose health has caused you so much anxiety in the past, time to get perfectly well, and perhaps to be taken ill again in regular rotation. Good-morning."

Fortunately, I had never traded on the family health, but now I was to begin. I determined upon my grandmother. I was ready to burst into tears, and "weep for Hecuba." Immense trouble I took with the touching narrative, and very, very nervous I was when I called on my tutor. He was hard at work.

"If you please, sir, I've called to ask you for an *exeat*."

My tutor looked up from his books and manuscript, hesitated, and then asked—

"Is it a matter of serious importance?" Now I was quite prepared to play "my grandmother," but I kept her in reserve, and simply answered, but very, very gravely, the question.

"Yes, sir, it is a matter of *serious* importance."

Whereupon he said no more, but tearing a piece of paper from a foil out of a sort of cheque-book, he signed date and name, and gave me the "ticket-of-leave." Not a word about my grandmother, thank goodness! With a light heart, a free and elastic conscience, I quitted the room, and rushed away in case he should change his mind, recall me, and retract the ticket. But he was too busy, and as my attendance at lectures had never demanded from him any exceptional show of interest in my proceedings, I daresay he did not give the matter another thought. Nor did I.

How Reginald Kelly obtained his *exeat* I forget. He was a very steady and regular undergraduate; his family had always been at Trinity Hall, and I believe that he simply

told the truth, explained he had unfortunately made some engagements which would keep him away, much to his regret, for a few days, and therefore an *exeat* was necessary, as an *absit* would cover only one day. Of course he didn't say he should be away for over a fortnight; that was not necessary.

CHAPTER X

ON TOUR—BATH MANAGER—PLYMOUTH—LONDON—MARIE WILTON—BUCKSTONE—PADDY—A MOMENTOUS INTERVIEW—BACK TO CAMBRIDGE—LONGS AND SHORTS—COACHING DAYS—BIG SMITH—COMPANIONS—ECCLESIASTICAL—STATE OF PARTIES—ARTHUR WARD—FREEMASONRY—SIR JAMES CRICHTON-BROWNE'S POSER—THE MASTER OF TRINITY AND HIGH CHURCHMEN—BAR OR CHURCH—LIGHTFOOT—HAROLD BROWNE—ADVICE—UPTON RICHARDS—A NEW DEPARTURE—CUDDESDON

SO away we went ; and with Horton Rhys " did " Bath, where we made the acquaintance of the manager, Mr. Chute, a great, big, very all-round actor, uncommonly like the pictures of Mr. Crummles in *Nicholas Nickleby* ; then we did Cheltenham, of which I do not remember much ; then we travelled on to Plymouth, where I was introduced to Mr. Newcombe, a fine old specimen of a race of provincial theatrical managers now absolutely extinct as the Dodo. He was hand and glove with " the nobility and gentry " of the neighbourhood ; he was a good sportsman, kept hunters, subscribed and rode to hounds ; and being clean shaven, with a frenchified " imperial " on his chin, when

in his hunting costume (green cutaway coat, breeches, Napoleon boots, and black hat) he looked uncommonly like the French "sportsman" that Leech used to caricature, or a "master of the ring." His theatre was a model; his pay good; his character as man and manager irreproachable. I forget whether we played at any other theatres *en route*, but we finished at Leamington, where Captain Horton Rhys put us up in first-rate style at his house, introduced us to the club, and made us thoroughly at home, so much so that we quite forgot all about rehearsal, and never went near the theatre until it was time to dress and "go on." All I remember of that performance is that Kelly stuck, that Horton Rhys swore; that I was all right in my own burlesque, but that Fitzgerald had somehow got "fogged" and was very unsteady as Villikins, while the lady who had kindly undertaken the part of Dinah, not having rehearsed it with him, was unable to prompt, but had the presence of mind to give "the cue for duet" to the orchestra, which thereupon struck up, and so startled Fitzgerald that he could neither say nor sing anything, but left it all to his Dinah, who cleverly finished the scene with a favourite dance, in which she had been accustomed to obtain an encore in the pantomime, and which won her a recall on this occasion; then all was over and the scene changed before Fitzgerald had recovered his senses and staggered off the stage somehow.

This association with Captain Horton Rhys resulted in my accepting his invitation to play for some charity, I forget what it was, at the Lyceum Theatre, which had been recently occupied by Charles Dillon and his company, who had been playing *Belphegor, the Mountebank*; at least, so I fancy, as far as I can tax my memory, though I seem to remember having at some earlier date seen the piece at the Adelphi. I think, too, but am not certain, that when I

saw *Belphegor*, Miss Marie Wilton, then quite a gay girl of, perhaps, fifteen, was playing the part of Belphegor's son. Whether the future Lady Bancroft was playing this part or was appearing as Cupid in a burlesque, *Atalanta* (I fancy it was), written by Frank Talfourd, and played at the Haymarket, I cannot precisely remember (though I remember her in both characters), but indelibly impressed on my memory is, that Miss Marie Wilton, then quite a young but very rising and *piquante* actress, was cast for the part of a chambermaid in a one-act farce, *A Phenomenon in a Smockfrock*, in which Captain Morton Price played *John Buttercup*, and I was cast for the part of *Old Somebody*, who had to be insulted by every one and snubbed by the chambermaid. I wish I could recall the "gag" that I, a mere amateur in my novitiate, attempted, during a scene with this expert professional *soubrette*, of some two or three years' experience of the stage, and how utterly I was routed and literally "shut up" by some smart retort of hers. I remember making my peace with her in so far as to be privileged to walk with her to the family residence, just over Waterloo Bridge, when I was introduced to one of her sisters, a very pretty, dark-eyed girl, afterwards Mrs. Drake, and was shown Marie's new flaxen wig, which she was to wear as Cupid, and which had just arrived from the *perruquier's*. Then in the evening came the performance, of which I remember very little except that some distinguished persons of title were present, that there was a gold-fringed satin programme, with lettering in blue (it is in my possession to this day), and that Horton Rhys, *alias* Morton Price, sang his songs as usual, and was in a general way very much pleased with himself, without any reference to his company, which, professionals excepted, from an artistic point of view, had not done him much credit.

In this and my appearances as already recorded

consisted my sole acquaintance with the professional stage.

And, by the way, one, only one, actor did I meet in private life, the way of it being as follows. After the success of the entertainment given in my rooms at Cambridge during my first term, it entered into my head that this farce of mine would be “just the very thing for Buckstone.” But how to bring it under his notice? I had heard of the difficulties of “struggling authors,” I had read of them, and it had occurred to me that as a university man I was far too well attired and too prosperous to merit even the small amount of attention which I was given to understand dramatic authors received at the hands of managers. In *The Man in the Moon* I had come across some very distressing scenes, written by Albert Smith, between managers, lessees of theatres, and dramatic authors; and it was from Albert Smith in his *Mr. Ledbury* and his *Pottleton Legacy* that I had learnt to look upon dramatic authorship as but a very poorly paid profession, wherein, unless possessed of a thorough knowledge of French, you had very little chance of making any money at all. There was, as I afterwards found, a certain amount of truth in Albert Smith’s sketches of professional theatrical characters, and, at that period, the sums realised by dramatic authors within the latter half of the nineteenth century would, in the eyes of their predecessors, have been beyond the dreams of avarice. However, the point for a dramatist of eighteen years of age was to get a piece accepted and played by a London manager. To achieve this would have indeed been a veritable triumph. So I confided in my friend, Paddy Green of Evans’s, where, as an *habitué*, I spent a considerable portion of my nights during the vacation, and sometimes when coming up to town on an *absit* would prefer putting up at the comfortable old hotel,

whereof Paddy was the landlord, in Covent Garden, and paying ready money, to increasing my indebtedness to Mr. Jubber, the landlord of Long's in Bond Street. Paddy Green was an intimate friend of Buckstone's, and most kindly undertook to present my manuscript farce to him, giving me also a letter of introduction, and telling me to call on the eminent comedian on a certain afternoon. Imagine my delight! Well do I remember going nervously to the stage door in Suffolk Street and being dubiously inspected by a surly-looking doorkeeper, and having humbly to withdraw on one side as certain actors, having just finished a late rehearsal, passed out. Among them were men whose faces I recognised immediately. Here came the smug Mr. Braid; here was the short, stout, and choleric-looking Mr. Rogers (Lord Halsbury is a pleasant likeness of this amusingly stolid comedian, who has long, long ago "joined the majority"); and here the dapper, crisp-speaking "Little Clark." They gave a glance at me, as much as to say, "I wonder what *he* wants," and then passed out. Some ladies followed and departed quickly; and then, a boy having said that "the gent was to be shown in," I was ushered in on to the stage, right at the back, where, it being very dark, I stumbled up against a wing, and had scarcely recovered myself and hardly become accustomed to the obscurity, when the boy, opening a side door, indicated that if I "stepped this way the guv'nor would be with me in a few minutes."

I entered: it was a kind of office, there was a writing table covered with manuscripts, letters, and writing paper; files of theatrical bills were hanging on the walls, the place was dimly lighted through a dirty window, and there was a general atmosphere of mystery and mustiness.

I had time to look about me; and on the table—could it be possible . . . yes—there was my manuscript play—

unrolled, opened! Good! then, at least, *it had been read!* Just to think of it! And in another few days it might be in full rehearsal, with the inimitable Buckstone in the principal part—that part in which I had already made such a hit in my own rooms at Cambridge, with perhaps charming Miss Louisa Howard, or elegant Miss Reynolds, as the wife! And while I was in this agitated state entered a funny-looking, round-faced, clean-shaved, twinkling-eyed, little man in an old faded dressing-gown and slippers.

“How dye do?” he said.

At once I knew him. There was no mistaking that peculiar twang, that rich unction of tone, that strangely humorous catching of the breath. . . . It was Buckstone!

I did not say, “Mr. Buckstone, I presume,” as that formula had not then been invented by Dr. Livingstone on meeting explorer Stanley, but only felt very hot, peculiarly uncomfortable, and began to name Paddy Green as a reference, speaking of him of course as “Mister Green,” not “Paddy.”

Buckstone interrupted me with “Yes, Green told me. So I—er—read the piece.”

I held my breath, and then I murmured—“and”—

“Well—er—it’s not bad for a beginner”—evidently a refusal—and so to speak I began to shrink back into the shell from which I had only just begun to emerge. “Yes,” he continued, “it’s not bad—but it—er—*it won’t do for this place.*”

And he handed me the manuscript. How I hated the sight of it, how I loathed the touch of it! but I accepted it from him, and devoutly wished that our positions could have been reversed, and that *he* could have “accepted it” from me.

I thought I would make just one struggle. “Perhaps,”

I began diffidently, and oh, so humbly! "if you could suggest some improvement"—

"Eh?" he asked, putting his hand to his ear. Then it flashed across me suddenly that Paddy Green had warned me of "Bucky's being a bit deaf."

"I was saying," I recommenced in a higher key, "that if you could suggest any improvement."

"No—er—I don't think so," he replied, cutting short my speech as he opened a side door, and invited me to pass into the passage, which, taking the hint, I did.

"It's a fine day for walking," was his next original remark as he opened the front door, and, with my infernal manuscript shoved awkwardly into the tail pocket of my undercoat, where it would be completely out of sight of the public gaze, I stepped out, agreeing with him as to his opinion on the weather, and bidding him as genially as I possibly could, "Good-bye."

"Eh?" he said, with his hand to his ear, then suddenly catching, as it were, the echo of my farewell, he smilingly repeated, "Oh—yes—good-bye—good-bye," and therewith the door was closed, and I found myself in Suffolk Street, depressed, disillusioned, and with a kind of feeling of being alone in the world.

At that moment from out of the United University Club at the corner came a college friend, my senior by one year, who was also in town on an *absit*.

"Hallo!" he cried, "when did you come up?"

"Yesterday. And you?"

"This morning. Lunched here. Where have you been?"

"Oh!" I replied negligently, "only just calling on old Bucky." I'd heard Paddy Green speak of him as "Bucky."

"Old *who*?" repeated my friend, puzzled.

"Bucky. Buckstone," I explained.

"Do you know him?" asked my friend in evident admiration, for I was a mere freshman, and in my second term.

"My dear chap," I answered, plucking up, "I shouldn't call on him if I didn't know him. But I'm off to get my things at Evans's and back again to Cambridge by last train."

So we parted. He was so much impressed that the next term he requested me to propose him for the A.D.C. I believe that afterwards he spoke of me to his friends as being on the best of terms with all the leading London actors.

The three years passed at the university, whether Oxford or Cambridge, will, I should say, be always reckoned as among the happiest, if not quite the happiest, in any man's life. There is just so much constraint as gives to the youthful undergraduate an increased zest for the sweets of liberty. Then the reading parties during "the long"! My recollection of these seasons of study and recreation is of the very pleasantest.

During two "longs," what a merry and studious party we were, under the guardianship of Hamblyn Smith, M.A., dear old "Big Smith" (of Caius I think he was), the best of all "coaches." One year we went to "the Lakes," and "did" Cumberland and Westmoreland pretty thoroughly. Another "vac." we passed principally at Bangor, and after that, three of us, "Dicky" Grosvenor (now Lord Stalbridge), Julius Rowley (who became the Reverend Julius), and myself "took a boat and went to sea." Precisely like Thackeray's three sailors, we "laded she" with a magnificent cargo of eatables. Unfortunately, in returning from the Isle of Man she sprung a leak; and it was a case of "all hands to the pumps" until we arrived safely at Liverpool. This accident having brought our cruise to an untimely finish, we had still

on hand a considerable amount of provisions. All that we did not bestow on the crew (of two men and a boy) we set to work to demolish, and instead of stopping on shore at an hotel, we always returned to the ship (having several days of our lease of the yacht—an old fishing smack—unexpired) for our meals, about which, as they mainly consisted of potted things in tins, there was a certain monotony which at last decided us on packing up our traps and staying at the celebrated Turtle Hotel at Liverpool “for one night only,” previous to the party breaking up and not meeting again until the commencement of the October term at Trinity.

I pass over all the A.D.C. term at Cambridge as dealt with in my book (already alluded to) of A.D.C. reminiscences.

At the beginning of my last year up at Trinity, and after I had begun “keeping my terms” at Lincoln’s Inn (which meant spending three pleasant days “on leave” in London in order to “eat my dinners” in the hall of Lincoln’s Inn) with a view to ultimately becoming a barrister, some clergyman, while I was on a visit in the country, pointed out to me that as none of my cousins were going into the Church, the living (I forget its name), which my Uncle George had purchased, would go abegging unless I liked to become a parson. How it came about that I did give this idea some considerable amount of attention, I cannot for the life of me say. But so it was, and while still “keeping my terms” at Lincoln’s Inn, I put the matter before my father, who, though at first rather disappointed at not being the proud parent of a Lord Chancellor, consoled himself with the prospect of having a son who would be on the high road to the Archbishopric of Canterbury; though, by the way, I doubt whether he knew very much about ecclesiastical titles and dignities. However, there was the living, and I rather think it was worth about

six hundred a year, but in these early days of youthful enthusiasm "money was no object."

During my last term at Cambridge I was somewhat startled on being informed by a youthful high churchman, a Mr. Kingdon, one of "the straitest sect of the Pharisees," that to attend the Masonic Lodge was incompatible with the ecclesiastical profession. I remember pointing out to this enthusiast (he was a scholar of Trinity), on his paying me a visit, that the master of the lodge was the Rev. Arthur Ward, who had the reputation of being a decided high churchman, in spite of his costume in which "low" predominated, as instead of a stiff clerical collar he had a low untidy white tie, a low-cut waistcoat, and low shoes. My interlocutor had evidently his doubts as to Ward's orthodoxy, and was clearly dissatisfied with me on account of my theatrical proclivities, and my still continuing to be president of the A.D.C., and taking part in the performances. By the way, I have forgotten to say that the club presented me with a very handsome silver inkstand on my "going down." It was presented to me at a large supper party of the members of the A.D.C., when Rowley Hill (afterwards Bishop of Sodor and Man) was the spokesman.

My high church acquaintance looked askance on the Rev. Arthur Ward and myself as being both Freemasons, a brotherhood which, as I found, was held in holy horror at that time by all of Mr. Kingdon's way of thinking. Why they condemned Freemasonry I could not understand, nor could they explain how it was that so many of the clergy of the Church of England were not only members of the Masonic body, but also actually held office in it as chaplains of lodges and grand-chaplains and so forth. The excellent young High Church clerical student could only deplore that such things should be permitted, and as we did not at all agree either as to Freemasonry or theatricals,

he gave me up as a hopeless case, and I saw him no more.

I have discovered a small diary, irregularly kept, but fairly recording religious sentiments, motives of action, doubts, difficulties, and events between September 1857 up to and inclusive of January 1859. It is, personally, most interesting, but, except for a few matters here and there, the entries do not come within the scope of these "Reminiscences," which are not of the nature of an *Apologia pro vitâ meâ*.

The above period was a critical one with me, as I was then shaking the undergraduate dust off my feet and was making an attempt "to rise on," not "my dead self," but on what I may term my "moribund self" (as far as university life was concerned, with a vast amount of kicking power still left, and, I may add, likely to remain "going fairly strong" to the end) "to better things." Very seriously, at the end of 1856, had I, by "special dispensation" (on account of my not being of age) become a Free and Accepted Mason. The Rev. Arthur Ward, to whom I have already referred, was the Master of the Lodge, and an excellent Master he was, well posted up in all the traditions of the masonic rites and ceremonies. With me had entered as apprentices, my friends, the companions of the yachting trip and reading tour aforementioned, "Dicky" Grosvenor and Julius Rowley. I can honestly say, for myself, that I was most thoroughly in earnest, and, unsettled as I was at that time as to my religious position, inclining towards the High Church views, after reading Blunt's *History of the Reformation* and Hallam's *Constitutional History*, I recognised in Freemasonry, as it then appeared to me, a scheme of wide-reaching benevolence, of Christian charity, of universal brotherhood under the highest religious sanction. Freemasonry seemed to me "to supply a want," and, within a

year, being punctual in attendance and working at it most enthusiastically, I was "raised to the 'sublime degree.'" I copy this from an entry in my diary "on the 10th November 1857." And as evidence of the serious earnestness of my intentions at the time, I may copy this note from the diary, which runs thus: "May the blessing of God be with all those who in deed and in truth act up to the principles of Masonry and the faith of a Christian." Even then it seems that I did not confuse the two.

The banquetings, the toasts, and the convivialism of the craft always seemed to me utterly out of place as following directly on the solemn "rites and mysteries." The ceremonies could not have been more impressively carried out anywhere than in our University Lodge, under the Master-ship of the Rev. Arthur Ward, who, however, a little later in life, found the practice of Freemasonry somewhat inconsistent with his advancing High Church views. Logically, no Christian can be a freemason unless he be the sort of hedging Christian who, imitating the liberal-minded emperor, Alexander Severus, included a statue of our Lord among those of all the gods with whose names and attributes he was acquainted. As my eminent friend Sir James Crichton-Browne put the query very neatly to a well-known Mason holding high office in the fraternity:

"If Masonry has a secret the knowledge of which would benefit all mankind, then for Masonry to keep such knowledge to itself is immoral. If, on the other hand, the 'secret' is *not* for the benefit of mankind, in professing it to be so Masonry is again guilty of an immoral act. If you Masons say that it is only to benefit certain persons who are prepared to receive such knowledge, then there is an end of the universality of the Brotherhood of Freemasonry."

There was no answer to this, and, so far as I can see, there is none.

While I am touching upon the fringe of the religious question up at the university in my time, I may mention that in this diary of mine I find frequent mention of the laxity of practice and the carelessness of public worship in the chapel of Trinity in the time of Dr. Whewell. I remember the young men of very High Church views going up to communion in chapel when Dr. Whewell was administering, and, when the "elements," at the end of the service, remained "unconsumed," Dr. Whewell used to insist on the communicants who had already "received" standing up in their places to "consume" the remaining bread and wine, which he and his assistant clergy (I forget who they were) handed round. If in this "after-service" Dr. Whewell caught sight of anyone devoutly kneeling, he would wait to see if this devotee meant to stand up. When communicant undergraduates, being of an ultra-high colour, discovered that, by refusing to rise at the bidding of the Master of Trinity, they would not be forced to "receive" twice at one celebration, which was to them a "sacrilege," they continued kneeling, and Dr. Whewell passed on. I fancy they were marked men in consequence, but I do not know, unless they were students, what effect "marking" would have had on them. *À propos* of "marking," it was essential for anyone qualifying for "taking orders" to be "marked" in by the two officials whose duty it was to score up all attendances in hall and chapel.

I remember bewailing this parlous state of things to some of the higher-Church-minded clergy of Trinity, one or two of whom used to conduct an "early celebration" on Sunday morning at St. Giles's Church in the town, where those who, like myself, shunned the college chapel as long as Dr. Whewell was the "celebrant," could worship in peace and quietness according to their conscience. "Vestments" were unheard of in those days, at least at Cambridge. An

unobtrusively embroidered "stole" was about the extent of the ritualistic excesses at that time; the cassock and surplice were strictly academical, and the "Genevan bands," as big as a barrister's or a judge's, were still worn by the officiating clergy. But these also were "academic." As for lights, incense, genuflexions, "crossings," and so forth, I did hear whispers of such matters, and was told that some "guild" ("of St. Albans," I think) indulged in ecclesiastical functions, with incense and a crucifix in a private room; but, if it were so, with this sort of hole-and-corner worship I never had the slightest sympathy, and personally never saw anything of the sort. The young men of my way of thinking at this time with whom I consorted were, I find, Cecil Alderson (a younger son of Judge Alderson), the Hon. "Freddy" Cavendish (the unfortunate victim of the Phoenix Park murder in 1882), and one Mr. Roberts, of whom the first and last became Anglican clergymen.

At this time I was beginning to think that it would be better to become a clergyman than a barrister. On the Saturday before Septuagesima Sunday, 1858, I took my B.A. degree, and soon after this I find I had prevailed upon my father to let me commence "reading for the Church," and had obtained his sanction for proceeding up to Cuddesdon College, there to study for "Orders."

How I came to hit upon Cuddesdon instead of the college at Wells (where several of my Cambridge friends had already entered as students) was by seeing this ecclesiastical seminary frequently mentioned in *The Union*, an "ultra-high" newspaper at that time. Dr. Lightfoot, afterwards Bishop of Durham, was now "officially" my tutor, as I was a graduate "remaining up." I still reckoned myself as being "on his side," and him I consulted as to reading. His strong point (*his* strong point, not *mine*) was Greek Testament; but, as far as I can remember, I did not attend many of his lectures,

but favoured those of Dr. Harold Browne, who was subsequently made a bishop; of Norwich I think, but am not sure.

In the course of my reading, coming to the study with "an open mind," I stumbled at many difficulties, to which Professor Harold Browne was always most courteously ready to listen, and, if possible, to explain, or at least to put the student in the right way for arriving at an elucidation.

He was a tall, thin, courtly, "professorial" person, of the old type of clergyman, of the ancient (perhaps by now extinct) high school, which ran into no kind of danger by excess, either in doctrine or in practice, and was personally most amiable. It was he who suggested my going up to Cuddesdon, seeing that my bent was more towards Oxford than towards Wells. Had he been very much worried by my pertinacity he might have bid me "go to Bath—and Wells." But he did not. He also mentioned the name of a certain Mr. Upton Richards, a clergyman in London, who was vicar, or rector, of All Saints, Margaret Street, at that time only a church in the catacombs, where the services were held in a kind of schoolroom, temporarily fitted up as a chapel, long before the splendid church and church-house were built by the munificence of Beresford Hope.

Upton Richards was in appearance about the last clergyman I should have remarked as a representative High Churchman. He did *not* wear a "high" waistcoat, he did *not* try to ape the costume of a Catholic priest, he had a "low" white tie, secular whiskers, and in bold teaching was considerably behind his younger curates. However, to him I went for "counsel and advice," and in less than ten minutes he had settled the question for me, and had confirmed Professor Harold Browne's recommendation. So I put myself

in communication with the Principal of Cuddesdon, the Rev. S. Pott, subsequently Archdeacon Pott, and by Easter 1858 I was duly installed in a student's room at Cuddesdon College, under the vice-principalship of the Rev. Henry Parry Liddon.

CHAPTER XI

FROM CAMBRIDGE TO CUDDESDON—LIDDON—
BISHOP WILBERFORCE—ARCHDEACON POTT
—GOLIGHTLY TROUBLE—A VACATION TRIP
—DIFFICULTIES—BENSON—COWLEY—
DEVELOPMENT—AN ORATION—A TERRIFIC
SCENE—NEXT MORNING—FRIENDLY PARTY
—BISHOP—ARCHITECT

RARELY do I remember being more astonished than when on arriving at the ecclesiastical Anglican seminary at Cuddesdon, a few miles out of Oxford, I was received by the Rev. Henry Parry Liddon, subsequently to be more widely known as Canon Liddon, one of the best preachers, if not the very best, among his contemporaries. Accustomed to such clerical dons as the University of Cambridge produced, attired in the ordinary black suit and white tie, with college cap and M.A. gown, and, as a rule, with a fine head of hair and full whiskers, I was "in amazement lost" on being received at the college by an Italian-looking ecclesiastic, glittering-eyed, clean-shaved, and closely-cropped, wearing a white band for a collar, and a black cassock with a broad belt, who, offering me his hand, welcomed me to the college with a sweetly persuasive smile suggestive of the slyest possible humour. The persuasive smile became occasionally rather irritating to anyone thoroughly in earnest, and though his insinuating

manner was most charming, and himself with the students most popular, yet could he at that time have spoken without the fear of "Sam Oxon" before his eyes, he would have won from all of us unlimited confidence. Personally, I have always thought of him as a delightful tutor and a charming companion, as long as the conversation was confined to indifferent topics. Reverencing the bishop "because of his office," which he "magnified" to any extent, he had not, as it seemed to me, a very exalted opinion of him as a man or as a churchman; and his imitations of "Sam" Wilberforce's peculiarly unctuous manner showed that, as a professional mimic, the Vice-Principal of Cuddesdon might have turned this talent to some account. He was an excellent imitator of everybody, but the bishop was his *chef-d'œuvre*; and then he invariably prefaced his imitation by speaking of him in an affectionate and apologetic tone, as "the dear bishop." Vice-Principal Liddon had an insinuating manner, which prevailed with himself but not with many others; and as to making things easy for everybody, and being "all things to all men," he was scarcely a whit behind his master in this art, Bishop Wilberforce. He was a pleasant lecturer; and, with an air of most complete candour, he would, in support of some crotchet of his own, give a reference which, on being tested (this rarely happened at the time, as what the Vice-Principal taught was taken on faith by his hearers), would be found to teach what was difficult to reconcile with H. P. Liddon's explanation of it. It was so characteristic of his "trimming" habit of mind, for him to join Dr. Pusey in declaring that if "the use of the Athanasian Creed were made optional," or if "there were any tampering" with it, he should be . . . "forced to reconsider his position." lame and impotent conclusion! At the college he was a fine preacher; his sermons were admirably delivered, with all the force of

genuine conviction, and invariably with such dramatic action as would have been natural to a French, Italian, or Spanish preacher.

The Principal of Cuddesdon College, who became afterwards Archdeacon Pott, was a kindly little man, with a wife and family, quite the type of a highly respectable High Church clergyman. He was smilingly patronised by "the Vice," and regarded as "safe," and useful, by the many-sided Bishop Samuel. Just before I went up to Cuddesdon there had been a kind of Ritualistic epidemic which had broken out in coloured vestments and a collegiate "Office Book of Hours." An evangelical clergyman of the diocese, a Mr. Golightly, got hold of this and came down so heavily on the bishop and his Cuddesdonites that, after a commission of inquiry which created a considerable stir at the time, all "illegal ornaments," including some handsome "vestments," had to be stowed away out of sight, and, at the time I speak of, the service books used in the small chapel, or rather oratory, contained nothing so flagrantly at variance with the decent order of Common Prayer as to warrant any further interference from an aggrieved ultra-Protestant.

It was during the summer vacation, while I was at Cuddesdon, that I made a six weeks' tour abroad, doing Belgium, the Rhine, and Switzerland, travelling third-class by train, and never riding or driving when I could walk; stopping in the cheapest rooms at the best hotels (the prices nothing like what they are nowadays, when they have gone up with the height of the buildings), and, possessing only the merest smattering of French, and no knowledge whatever of German, I enjoyed myself in so free-and-easy and so simple a manner as I have never, no, absolutely never, been able to do since that time.

I was fortunate enough to make friends with a most hospitable English family,—father, mother, two daughters, charming, and a son,—who invited me to accompany them on all their trips; also, over an evening pipe and a tankard of beer, I established relations with a courier, in charge of a party, who put me up to enjoying myself in the best way at the most moderate cost, and gave me a line of route and introductions to certain landlords with whom he was on most friendly terms. What was my luggage? A portable valise and a knapsack. Not a single thing more. No dress clothes: my dependence was solely on Providence and the washerwoman; for the most part an out-of-door life, with chance companions of various nationalities. Being a theological student of Cuddesdon, preparing for “Anglican Orders,” I felt a natural curiosity to learn as much as I could of the ways of the Catholic clergy abroad, as, of course, according to *our* theory (the Liddon and Pusey one), we of the Anglican Church were always putting forward our claim of “belonging to the same body,” which, on the other hand, would be naturally considered, to quote the well-known form of advertisement, an “untradesmanlike falsehood.” However, although *en voyage* I accepted friendly pinches of snuff with some travelling *curé* or *vicaire*, my conversational powers, in consequence of my poor equipment of languages, were confined to addressing them in Latin; but as their pronunciation differed entirely from mine, mutual understanding was difficult, except when question and answer were reduced to writing, which soon became irksome. The clergy I met seemed to be very homely, snuffy, and stuffy people, not to be mentioned in the same sweet breath with our neat, dapper, academical and excessively cleanly English clerics, whether married or single. So I returned to Cuddesdon filled with the idea of getting ordained as soon as possible, marrying

a charming young lady (of course, a devoted High Church wife), and settling down in the living in which, as I understood that my cousins had refused it, I could at once be placed by the holder of the presentation.

I studied hard: went at it with a will. Suddenly, a difficulty. Vice-Principal doesn't explain it satisfactorily; Principal doesn't explain it at all. Unsettled. Another difficulty: men are going in for ordination, and I read the oath that every candidate has to take. I am faced by "the Royal Supremacy." Still more unsettled. Explanations hopelessly unsatisfactory. The "Black Rubric" stares me in the face. On posers' heads posers do congregate. They increase and multiply: Principal and Vice-Principal helpless. *Quo tendimus? In Latium?* No; in my own opinion, most decidedly not. I was sure my difficulties could be answered and my doubts dispelled; but by whom? That was the question, and the answer given to it by Principal and Vice-Principal was "By Benson." Their advice was "Go to Mr. Benson."

Now this Mr. Benson of Cowley, long afterwards known as the originator of the "Cowley Fathers" (and himself recognised everywhere as "Father Benson," powerful preacher and "missioner"), was giving the students some sermons in our college chapel. Personally, this eminently respectable clergyman bore at that time (and I have never seen him since) a curiously weird resemblance to the "Rev. Mr. Stiggins," the "shepherd" of Mrs. Weller's worship. His style of oratory was very effective with the majority, among whom I never could reckon myself. However, having been recommended to "go to Benson," to Benson I consented, willingly, to go. It was confidently supposed that Benson would throw light on all my difficulties. I may here pause for a moment to mention that on the only night I

remained in his village, where I put up at the old-fashioned inn,—I drove there from Cuddesdon, being so admonished by the Principal and Vice-Principal,—Mr. Benson kindly made me free of his theological library, whence he hoped I would take any books I might require to read on the all-engrossing subject. Now at that time, although to me, as to everyone else, the name of John Henry Newman was “a household word,” I had never read one single line of his writings. After Mr. Benson had quitted me to attend to his parochial duties, having directed my attention to certain well-known “Anglo-Catholic” works, and before I had been a quarter of an hour alone in his library, one book on the table attracted, nay, forced itself on my attention. It seemed to say “*Tolle, Lege.*” And I took it up. *Newman’s Doctrine of Development!* I opened it: it looked dull, dry, unattractive. I shook my head, put it down again, and resumed my search for the books and treatises that worthy Mr. Benson had left for my instruction and enlightenment. One after the other I removed them from the shelves and replaced them. I was fascinated by the dingy-looking book on the table bearing the magic name of Newman, and finally yielded. I took up the book, added a few others to it, so as to give myself a chance in case I had erred in selection, and then, at about three in the afternoon, I returned to the inn, made myself as comfortable as possible in an old-fashioned sitting-room, with a good fire, where, except for a short interval of about half an hour for dinner, I set myself to read Newman’s work steadily and carefully. I was like the good St. Anthony in the profane song, who

“kept his eyes
So firmly fixed on his old black book,”

that nothing disturbed me, and if I paused for a few seconds to light a pipe and to take some coffee (I affected neither

wine nor spirits in those temperate days), I made up for the loss of time by increased attention to the business in hand. So it came to pass that as I did not leave the house in order to call upon Mr. Benson, my reverend and kindly host, thinking that something might be wrong, came over to the inn to inquire about his *protégé*.

He did not cause his arrival to be announced, but entered the room. Becoming aware of the open door, I looked up, and then I saw standing away in the gloom a dark-robed figure, whom, on raising aloft one of the inferior wax candles supplied by the inn, I ascertained to be the Rev. Mr. Benson, who had glided almost noiselessly on to the scene like "Margaret's grim ghost." I at once rose to receive him respectfully, when it suddenly occurred to me that judging from the severe glance with which he regarded my pipe, he considered smoking as a step on the downward and broad path. At once I apologised for my indulgence in tobacco, and wished that I had been less absorbed in my studies, so that I might have forestalled his visit to me by calling upon him. Courteously he waved aside my pipe and advanced towards the table. The books of his choice were lying on it untouched; the book of *my* choice was in my hand.

"You have been reading that work of Newman's?" he asked grimly.

Yes I had.

"It was not one of those I selected for you," he continued, severely sad.

No; I admitted it was not. "It is, in fact," I went on somewhat nervously, foreseeing trouble ahead, "one that I chose for myself." Then I added apologetically and reproachfully, "It was on your study table, Mr. Benson."

"Indeed!" he said, apparently much astonished; evidently he did not remember having placed it there; nor did he seem to have any recollection of having recently consulted it.

Then he lectured me upon the errors of Newman, and of the serious consequences of adopting this "theory of development," and following it out to its logical conclusion. He was most impressive, in delivery and in action. But—he left me untouched. Nay, strangely enough, the more powerfully (always in voice and manner) he argued against Newman and against Rome, whither he saw, but I didn't, that I was tending, the more convinced I gradually became that Newman and Rome were absolutely right. And so firmly impressed was I at the end of his controversial address by this conviction, that I do believe had a Catholic priest walked in and said to me, "Now, sir, will you be a Catholic *hic et nunc*?" I should have replied, "Why, certainly." But as this dramatic episode did not occur, and as Mr. Benson paused for breath and evidently expected some sort of reply from me, or that, at least, I should put forward some argument which he would proceed at once triumphantly to demolish, he was very naturally taken rather aback when I felt myself compelled to candidly own that I had no remarks to offer on the subject, except I said that, "as far as I understand the matter"—I hesitated diffidently enough at this point, and then blurted out, "*I entirely agree with Dr. Newman.*"

Fancy! "Ditto to Dr. Newman!" There is a ridiculous side to the most serious incidents. The humour of this scene, as I considered it afterwards, was delicious! We were both earnest enough at the time, and I doubt if the Rev. Mr. Benson ever did really perceive its humorous aspect. But imagine the two! The gaunt, spectacled clergyman wrapped in so prodigious a cloak that, when he raised his arms, it

gave him a vampire-batlike appearance of out-spreading wings which would bear him aloft previous to his swooping down on and transfixing his victim (me), was something weird and uncanny. He gave me up as lost, a veritable son of perdition ; and raising his lanky arms and bony hands towards the ceiling, he violently denounced me. "Denounced" is a mild word ; it was simply nothing but an anathema pronounced in severest ecclesiastical phrase,—English, not Latin. He meant it to be terrible, he meant to frighten me back into what he considered the right path and to deter me from Rome. I do not know whether he expected me to wither away on the spot, or to kneel down and writhe in agony, while imploring him to withdraw his awful words ; all I do know is that "I was not a penny the worse" ; and politely bowing to him, I simply expressed myself sorry that I should have been the cause of his losing his temper, and so wished him cheerfully "good-night." He made a somewhat ineffective exit, as of course he ought to have gone out on the last word of the curse, and have disappeared in the darkness of the passage. However, the point was, that he went ; and so left me in peace to continue my study of *The Doctrine of Development*, which I read far into the night.

The next morning I attended his early service, "just to show there was no ill-feeling" towards him on my part ; and, after breakfast, he himself reappeared in my room and tendered me a manly and quite sufficient apology, which as from an elder to one so much his junior in years and experience, was indeed a most generous thing to do. He said he had spoken in his wrath, and had said too much. Of course I interposed with "Oh, not at all," but nothing would satisfy him but that I should understand how he quite withdrew his anathema, and how therefore I should so to speak, leave the court without a stain on my character

We shook hands. He (bless him for a Retractarian !) wished me well ; regretted the inevitable ; said he would write to the Principal of Cuddesdon, whither I presently returned in order to spend a short time in packing up my few possessions (chiefly books), with which and with my portmanteau and about twenty pounds in my pocket—"my little all"—I went up to London.

Downright Mr. Benson was far better to deal with than the Bishop of Oxford, with whom also I had had a brief interview some little time previous to my visiting Cowley. His Lordship Sam Wilberforce was rotund, softly spoken, "washed his hands with invisible soap," as was consistent with his sobriquet, "and imperceptible water," while talking to me in the most affable manner. The line he took, as far as I remember, was that, in comparison with the difficulties as I had stated them, how much greater were the difficulties elsewhere ; and then he addressed what he considered "comfortable words" to me with, as I may term it, since he looked upon me as a departing soul, "extreme unction."

I remember a story of Bishop Sam Wilberforce and the architect of his "palace" Cuddesdon. It was said, with what truth I don't know,—probably it was an invention of the enemy,—that the architect, one Arthur Pearson, or Penrhyn (or any name beginning with a "P"), obtained the bishop's leave to having his own initials carved on the stone-work on one side of the gateway, while the bishop's initials were to be on the opposite side. But when it was demonstrated to his Lordship that on one pillar of his palace gate would appear the initial letters of "Samuel Oxon," "S. O.," and on the opposite pillar those of "Arthur Penrhyn," "A. P.," his Lordship immediately withdrew his permission. It was already quite enough

that the bishop's theological college should be under the direction of "a Pott with a Lid-on." These stories were current then, and are probably not yet forgotten. I do not give them as new, nor the "A. P." one as true.

CHAPTER XII

AMONG THE OBLATES — VISITING HOUSE — A
SCENE—A FRIEND IN NEED—INTERVIEW—
DR. MANNING — AN APPRECIATION — COM-
PANIONS—A WONDERFUL SERMON—AN OLD-
WORLD CELEBRITY — PÈRE RATISBONNE —
ANOTHER FUTURE CARDINAL — THE OLD
SCHOOL—FATHER FABER—A DECISION—OLD
STORY CORRECTLY RE-TOLD — FAREWELL
TO ST. MARY'S

I SHALL not dwell unnecessarily upon this period as being the *viâ media* between my being "off with the old love and on with the new," when I gave up all idea of a snug Anglican parsonage, determined upon resuming my dinners at Lincoln's Inn and my attendance at lectures in the Temple, with a view to becoming a barrister more or less learned in the law. Between quitting Cuddesdon and settling down to legal study, I stayed at the House of the Oblates at Bayswater, then presided over by Dr. Henry Edward Manning, who, when I was temporarily homeless (in consequence of my having become a Catholic) and practically penniless, put me up for as long as I liked to stay, and, if I found the life suited me, and discovered in myself a "vocation," Dr. Manning, who was kindness itself, would have received me into the company of the "Oblates of St. Charles Borromeo." In return for this timely hospitality,

I, being fresh from college, undertook to impart such elementary classical knowledge as any youthful student among the Oblates might require.

But as I may fairly consider my first interview with Dr. Henry Edward Manning as the turning-point of my career,—I had just completed my twenty-first year,—I may be permitted to dwell, for a few moments, on the interval that preceded what was to me, certainly, the most momentous occasion of a lifetime.

My darkness having been unilluminated by any rays where-with the learned lights of Cuddesdon could enlighten it, it occurred to me to write to Dr. Manning, of whom for years I, in common with everyone else, had heard so much. To him by letter I stated my serious doubts and difficulties. Within a couple of days his reply came: with it a small book, of which he was the author. His letter, without any waste of words, simply answered my questions clearly and straightforwardly; he begged to inclose a little pamphlet which might be of use to me.

Letter and pamphlet, practically, clenched the matter. I had made up my mind there and then, and never for one single second at any period of my life have I repented of or regretted the step I then took.

I went home, meaning to acquaint my father with my determination. I was perfectly willing to wait, to agree to read, to learn, to digest, and so forth, if that was the course to be insisted upon by paternal authority.

Nervously I descended from my cab. Somehow I did not like the subdued manner in which the butler, ordinarily smiling but now exceptionally grave, received me; nor did I look upon it as a cheerful omen, that, instead of taking my portmanteau up to my bedroom, he deposited it in the hall, and left it there. Then he informed me—

"Mr. Francis, your father will be down directly."

And therewith he ushered me into our dining-room.

This all looked ominous.

I had been in the room some ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, and was just beginning to wonder, as my courage was commencing to "ooze out," whether I had not better defer the interview until another day, when in came my father, like a whirlwind.

Temper! No—I never remember having seen anyone in so violent a temper. He held a letter in his hand, and when he could speak,—for he wouldn't even acknowledge my filial greeting,—he exclaimed—well—no matter—he was violent. I trust the attention of the "Recording Angel" was momentarily distracted from this scene. He showed me a letter of about eight pages, written to him by Dr. Pott of Cuddesdon, of the purport of which I am sure he understood as much, or as little, as he did of the differences, and the distinction, between the Anglican-Protestant and the Catholic Church, that is absolutely nothing. For his was a case of "invincible ignorance," or as the Irish gossoon expressed it to Archbishop Whately, "inconsayvable ignorance," if ever there were one, and his vocabulary, being fortunately limited, did not supply him with an epithet strong enough for him to apply to me. He calmed down a bit so as to read aloud the letter, which, as I found, told the truth without any undue bias; the only mistake made was in giving vent to a suspicion that I had been influenced by some one outside the college, meaning, perhaps, two or three of their former students who had become Catholics. However, this was a mere surmise, without proof, or any foundation whatever in fact.

The upshot of this most painful and trying interview was that my father, declaring I should never have a penny from him, and that I might go to, it mattered not where,

for all he cared, flung out of the room, banged the door, and left me in the dimly-lighted dining-room.

I hesitated ; should I follow and reason with him ? Should I see my stepmother and ascertain if she were willing to speak on my behalf ? However, while *multa revolvens*, in came the butler, sad but sympathetic, to ask—

“ Should he get me a cab ? ”

That question settled the matter. Certainly, a cab, at once.

But—*where was I to go ?*

For over a year and a half I had had very little indeed to do with London life. I was not the bold rover I had been, and, moreover, the amount of cash in my pocket was not only limited, but when that should be exhausted to whom was I to apply for a further supply, however small ? In the circumstances I could not go to uncles, cousins, or aunts.

Suddenly I remembered my friend F. C. Wilson, a prominent member of the A.D.C., who had gone down from Trinity the year before me, and with whose address in London I was acquainted in consequence of having written to him during my last term at Cambridge, asking him to come up and stay with me in “ the A.D.C. week ” and play a part. If I remember rightly, he accepted and appeared there “ for the last time ” on that occasion. So, naturally, to his rooms in Conduit Street I went. He was not in, but would be soon. I deposited my incubus of a portmanteau. The maid rather thought he had gone to Farm Street Church, in which case he would be sure to return soon after six o’clock, and, besides that, he was dining at home.

“ Anyone with him ? ” I inquired.

Well, it appeared dinner had been ordered for two, but she didn’t know who the other gentleman was. “ Would

I," she confidently asked, "step up to Mr. Wilson's room and wait?"

I would, and I did.

Such a snug bachelor establishment! so luxurious, as it then appeared to me, after coming from the chill of my father's reception in the dim dining-room.

In a niche under a canopy in a corner of the room was placed a statue of The Madonna. There were flowers around it, above and at its feet, flowers in vases, and a light burning before it. I knew little of such matters, and this was quite new to me. I remembered that he had been given to ecclesiastical decoration in his rooms at Cambridge. But, personally, for the decorative externals of religious worship I have never cared out of their proper place. Still, I remember well how this arrested my attention. I was standing absorbed in meditation on recent events and recalling to myself scenes of our old friendship at Cambridge, when the door opened and in came Freddy Wilson, beaming with delight, and giving me such a welcome as would have made the greatest stranger feel absolutely at home there and then on the spot.

"I knew you'd come," he said presently. "And"—

"I am going to be a Catholic," I said.

He hadn't words; he hadn't tears; he was absolutely overcome with joy. He shook my hand heartily. Then, without speaking, we both sat down, opposite to one another, on either side of the fireplace.

Presently, breaking the silence, he told me why his first words had been, "I knew you'd come."

But at this point I stop. On some other occasion I may tell it all. I will only say, here, that he had had a strange presentiment of this very event, and, moreover, that it would happen on the 8th of December, or within a day or two of that date one way or the other. And so it was.

I pass on, as the foregoing was but the preface to my meeting the late Cardinal, at that time Dr. Henry Edward Manning, superior of the Oblates of St. Charles, Bayswater. I mentioned the fact of my brief correspondence with Dr. Manning to my friend, and he at once advised me to call on him.

"I know Dr. Manning slightly," said Fred. Wilson, "but sufficiently well, in the circumstances, to warrant my taking you up to Bayswater and introducing you to him."

I thanked him sincerely.

"In the meantime," he continued, "we'll dine together and have a chat over old times. There's a spare room here, and you can make this place your home for as long as you like to stay." So a note was written to Dr. Manning; a reply was received next day, making an appointment for the evening.

Never shall I forget my first meeting with Henry Edward Manning, D.D., formerly Protestant Archdeacon of, as I think, Chichester, but at this time head of the Catholic Oblates of St. Charles Borromeo, a community of "seculars" serving the Church of St. Mary of the Angels, Bayswater.

Dr. Manning's appointment with me was for five o'clock on an evening in the second week of December, the date of which, I regret, has not been entered in my diary. I was to meet the man whose career was public property, who had been one of the burning and shining lights of the Anglican Church, and whose name, coupled with that of John Henry Newman, had been in the mouth of everyone interested in what had been originally known, in the earlier part of last century, as "the Oxford Movement."

In his reply to a letter of mine, Dr. Manning had answered all my difficulties, and I had nothing left to ask him. It was for him to finally decide on the next step.

Nervously, then, I inquired of the "brother" who opened the door, "if Dr. Manning expected me?"

The "brother" didn't know.

"The Father," he said, in language quite new to my ears, "was just going out. In fact, there was, at the door, the carriage that had been sent to fetch him."

Out of the dark December night, hazy with London fog, I saw the two carriage lights shining, and, dimly, the horses and coachman.

I hesitated. Should I call again? At what hour to-morrow? When the "brother" exclaimed—

"Ah! here is the Father."

And descending the steps, illumined by only one gaslight, I saw a cloaked figure, whose face was hidden by a broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat. It paused for a moment as the little porter, rendered still less by contrast, ran up the stairs and arrested his descent.

"Ah!" said Dr. Manning, removing his hat and inclining his head towards me as I bowed, "I have a few minutes to spare. Will you"—this to me most persuasively—"come this way?"

And turning, he ascended the steps, leading the way up another short flight into a wide corridor—I noticed nothing, except that the architecture was Gothic—at the end of which was a door; this he pushed open, and after the briefest possible pause, as if to ascertain whether there was anybody there, he beckoned to me, and made his way up towards the large fireplace of the plain Gothic hall which, as I found out afterwards, was the refectory. He motioned me to a chair on the right of the fireplace as he seated himself on a bench on the opposite side. Then, with his right hand, long and thin, screening himself from the fire, he looked me full in the face. What a wonderful look! The thin sharp outlines of the features, the massive forehead, the broad bald head, of which

the crown was covered by a skull-cap, called, as I afterwards ascertained, a *solli-deo*, because never raised except when in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, in fact the whole appearance of the man who had given up everything "for conscience' sake," so strongly impressed me that for a few seconds I was utterly overcome; not with visible emotion, but I had no words.

At once Dr. Manning put me at my ease. His summary of his own difficulties years ago, an expression of the deepest sympathy with mine now, and, not only with mine, but with those of all whom I was leaving at "the parting of the ways," at once won me. My doubts had been his doubts, my difficulties his difficulties, his course of action was to be my course of action.

And so within half an hour, for this momentous interview scarcely lasted so much, all was settled. Dr. Manning was deeply moved; his voice trembled as he gave me his blessing, and then, shaking me cordially by the hand, bade me good-night, swiftly descended the stairs and passed out.

I followed slowly, meditating; so far contented, for the end of my journey was in sight.

That was my first interview with Dr. Manning, afterwards Henry Edward, Cardinal, Archbishop of Westminster.

And then when I came to know him better, when after being received into the Church, he entertained me as a guest, permitting and encouraging me to serve a novitiate on trial, just to see if I had a vocation or not, how delightfully boyish he could be in moments of relaxation!

It delighted him to give us reminiscences of his youthful Oxford days, of how he rode to hounds, and was not an indifferent pugilist. He would throw himself into what Dickens has described as "a paralytic attitude," supposed to be that of a scientific prize-fighter, and there he would "spar," "letting out" with his long arms at his nephew

Willie Manning (then a novice at St. Charles's), or at Walter Richards (now a D.D. and one of the gravest of school inspectors), or at Cyril Forster the youngest of the Oblates, then a lad of about sixteen, my pupil in classics, and enjoying his exercise amazingly. Those who did not know Dr. Manning like this did not Dr. Manning know. His private room was poorly furnished with the bare necessities; his cassocks were old; all his money, from first to last, went in charity (the Manning family were wealthy), and, when he died, I think the assets of this Cardinal Prince of the Holy Roman Church amounted to about a hundred pounds! A Liberal in the truest sense, he was in sympathy with General Booth and with those honest Radicals who, without attempting to subvert existing Government, and without aim of self-aggrandisement, were willing to devote all their energies to benefiting the labourer who was “worthy of his hire” and those helpless poor dependent on him.

While at Bayswater my companion was James Marshall, once a Protestant clergyman, afterwards Sir James, Chief Justice on the Gold Coast. What an amusing time we had of it! He was told off as one “cantor” to lead the right-hand side of the choir of boys at Vespers, and I was the other. A nice pair! For Marshall, having only one arm, could with difficulty find his place, and keep it, in the book without assistance; while I, on the left, could never arrive at finding any places at all, and was either behindhand, or beforehand, or out of it altogether, except when a sharp choir-boy, well rehearsed in the varying psalms of the day, would prompt me in a whisper and put me right.

To this day my wonder is that we were allowed to continue in this office. I fancy it was hoped by the clergy that practice would make me perfect. Ah! but perfect—what? That is the question. It was not in my time, nor in Marshall's, and I never improved. Before quitting this very brief

account of a brief story, I must record two things : the first is of the most remarkably short sermon I have ever heard in my life ; and it was this :—

There was a Doctor Donovan (I think, but I have forgotten), who came from Rome, a thorough Irish-Roman ecclesiastic, and Doctor of Divinity. He was eccentric, and I fancy did not remain at St. Mary's any time, having money of his own, and a will of his own into the bargain. However, as long as he was nominally an "Oblate" (or one of the "Omelettes of St. Charles," as an old lady used to call them), he had to conform to the rules and take his turn in the pulpit.

His evening came. Beforehand he had been walking up and down the "ambulacrum" muttering to himself, evidently rehearsing, and therefore interrupted by no one.

In the evening, after a psalm or two and prayers, the choir sat down and the congregation subsided into quiet expectancy. Dr. Donovan issued from the sacristy, made his obeisance, knelt for a while before the altar, and then gravely, but with a most confident air, ascended to the pulpit. Then came the usual dedication, everyone making the sign of the cross.

"Ahem!" said the preacher, and paused.

All eyes were on him. His manner was most impressive. The choir and the clergy regarded one another curiously.

"Ahem!" repeated the worthy doctor, and fitted his gold-rimmed spectacles more securely on his nose.

Clergy and choir appeared absorbed in devout contemplation of the roof.

Congregation's eyes on the preacher who wasn't preaching.

Dr. Donovan looked amiably round, once more fitted his glasses, and then lifting his book, read aloud, in strongest possible Irish accent, the text on which he was going to preach.

So far so good. There were some who smiled, for the good doctor's broad Irish took them by surprise.

Then there was another pause, during which clergy and choir, tiring of the roof, turned their eyes towards the rotund figure in the pulpit. All attention was, by now, centred on him. He paused. He regarded the congregation. He seemed to be swallowing something with difficulty. Then he opened his lips.

"Me bruthrun," says he emphatically, and stopped short.

Everybody listened eagerly. We were hanging on his lips ; but he didn't keep us long in suspense, for raising his right hand and making the sign of the cross, as is usual at the finish of a sermon, he said fervently—

"A blessing I wish ye all, *in nomine*, etc."

And so saying, after blessing everybody, he calmly descended, walked across the choir, genuflected, disappeared into the sacristy—and *that was all!!* No more sermon ! The congregation were aghast. Was he ill ? One of the clergy left the choir to see if anything was the matter with him. Not a bit of it ; indeed, scarcely had the priest, who had gone to inquire, left his seat than our worthy "D.D." returned and took his ordinary place among the assistant clergy.

After the service, as we were re-entering the house, Dr. Donovan came up with Marshall and myself, and patting me on the back, said quite self-complacently—

"Well, Misther Burny,"—this was his abbreviation of my name,—“what did ye think o' *that* for a sermon, eh ? I fancy I gave it 'em pretty strong."

We were "in amazement lost." He actually was under the impression that he had been preaching a powerful sermon !

All we could reply was, "Well, doctor, it wasn't too long," with which he was immensely flattered. I do not remember his ever having been put on the preaching list again ; indeed,

I think, that soon after this he left the college and returned to Rome ; unless, maybe, he was appointed as private chaplain to a deaf nobleman.

The other experience was a link with my past and with my future as it was to be when I had quitted the Oblates. One afternoon I was asked to accompany Walter Richards in showing a visitor over the church.

I went down and found my friend talking to a short, stout old gentleman, with white hair, white moustache and beard. He was a pleasant man, with a jovial voice and manner. His eyes twinkled with humour. Walter Richards was showing him all over the church, explaining the pictures, statues, and altars, and the stout little man, much interested, was asking all sorts of questions. It appeared that he had not been long a Catholic ; my own opinion, after learning his name, was (and is), that he had for years neglected his "duties," had become nothing at all, but later in life had returned to "his Father's house," after the manner of the Prodigal Son.

"My friend here," said Walter Richards, intimating me, "is very fond of theatricals," and then he told our visitor as much as he himself knew concerning the A.D.C., adding an opinion of his own as to my histrionic abilities, of which I had occasionally given evidence to him and others in our recreation time.

"Ah !" said the little man, turning to me, "I ought to have known you a long time ago." We were in the sacristy, where all the banners and processional crosses were kept. He scrutinised them critically, and then observed to me quietly, "Good 'properties' these, eh ?"

This at once recalled the A.D.C. and all past theatrical days. I explained "properties" to Walter Richards, who was much amused. Then our round good-humoured little

man went on to recount to us how he remembered this, that, and the other, in dramas, and a good deal about "properties" and scenes and theatres, when, it suddenly occurring to him that perhaps the conversation was not altogether in keeping with the fitness of things, he pulled out his watch, observed he had no idea it was so late, asked Richards if he had his address, as in a few weeks he should return to reside in the neighbourhood, and should be a constant attendant at this church, but that he must now go; and so bidding us good-bye, Walter Richards showed him out by the sacristy door into the street.

"Who was that?" I asked.

"Eh?" exclaimed Richards, and then, as if much annoyed with himself, he said, "I thought I had introduced you, and I was wondering you didn't take to him more."

"Why?"

"Why?" reiterated Walter Richards, "why, that was Bunn, 'the Poet Bunn,' as he used to be called in *Punch*."

"Bunn!" Absolutely a household name to me when I was twelve years old! And this was Bunn, the librettist of Balfe! Bunn of English opera fame; Bunn, who had retaliated on those who had cruelly attacked him week after week in *Punch*, and had scored such a triumph at one blow, that he had never been attacked again!

Only once more did I see him. It was in this same church, a few days after, devoutly praying in the chapel of St. Charles Borromeo. I lingered for a few moments in the hope of having some further conversation with him. But I fancy that with great fervour he was reciting the entire rosary from beginning to end, and, as duty compelled my presence in the house, I was reluctantly compelled to leave him at his devotions. I never had the chance of seeing him again.

And here a remarkable figure is recalled to my memory. It is that of a quiet, elderly, worn-looking French priest,

with a sweet gravity of manner that attracted all of us younger students ; he was a spare man, of middle stature, whose grizzled beard and moustache denoted either a monk or Eastern missionary. His appearance strongly impressed me, and, moreover, this was the first occasion of my seeing in England any exception to the close-shaven rule observed by all the Catholic clergy whom I had hitherto encountered.

We were in the *ambulacrum*, ready for the community dinner at one o'clock, and only awaiting the arrival of Dr. Manning, who, a few minutes before the hour, descended from his room, bringing with him the guest above mentioned, to whom he at once, with greatest courtesy of manner, introduced the clergy one by one, all the while speaking in French. I noticed that every one of the Fathers bowed with the utmost respect to the foreigner, and such of them as spoke French, or Italian, entered into conversation with him during the brief opportunity afforded them before the bell, sounding punctually at the hour, summoned us to the refectory.

"Do you know who that is?" Walter Richards asked me, as we took our places at the tail of the little procession.

"No," I replied ; "who?"

"*Le père Ratisbonne*," answered my companion, evidently delighted at having been able to give me this surprise.

After this, it was with the greatest difficulty I could take my eyes off our guest. And no wonder. A long time before this date I had read the story of the conversion of M. Ratisbonne, as it was told, unsympathetically of course, in the newspapers, and although, naturally, the event had struck me at the moment, yet I had never given it a second thought, nor had I any ground for considering it as a matter that could be at any time of the slightest possible interest to myself personally. But during my

stay with the Oblates I had come across a little book by M. le Baron de Bussières, giving the story of Monsieur Ratisbonne's miraculous conversion to Christianity, of which the writer of the above-mentioned work was an eye-witness, as he himself relates. To the Baron, Alphonse Ratisbonne, as earnest a Jew as was once Saul of Tarsus, had said, "The sight of the Ghetto in Rome has rekindled all my hatred of Catholicism."

The fact of his elder brother having become a Catholic and a priest,—he was M. L'Abbé Ratisbonne,—had rendered his antipathy to Christianity still more violent. When I met Le Père Alphonse Ratisbonne at St. Mary's, Bayswater, he had been a Catholic some sixteen or seventeen years, during the greater part of which time he, the founder of the missionaries of Mount Zion, had devoted himself entirely to missionary work in the East.

What might have been the object of his coming to England I do not know. I saw him this once, and I well remember every one of us, as we bade him good-bye, instinctively kneeling and asking his blessing. We felt that his presence among us was one of those occasions which are far more rare than are proverbially "angels' visits."

I call to my mind, too, how silent we were for some time after he had left, and how Walter Richards and myself sat together without speaking a word, both of us wrapt in thought. However, routine work had to be done, and so we broke up our *séance*.

"We've been very silent," I observed to Walter Richards, with something of an effort.

"We have," he replied gravely, "but you see, my dear fellow, it isn't every day one meets a man who *has actually seen our Lady*."

Another figure prominent among many stands out among my memories of this period. As we were taking post-prandial coffee, our "custom always of an afternoon" (certainly on *festas* if not on ordinary days), and were scattered about the room chatting, while Dr. Manning conversed with the elders, occasionally walking up to the different groups, and, in his drily humorous way, taking a part in the conversation whatever it might be, a lay brother entered and announced a name that I did not catch. Following close at his heels entered a handsome ecclesiastic, bright-looking, fresh-coloured, with such long black curly hair as I had only seen represented in pictures of French abbés in the early part of 1800. This young ecclesiastic, in the prime of life,—I should say at that time not very much over thirty,—brought with him into the community room quite a breezy northern air; he was so fresh, so full of *verve*, so buoyant, that I could not for a moment imagine him to be a grave, reverend, and learned Doctor of Divinity, just arrived from Rome, from the Collegio Pio I think, and one among the seniors of the Oblates of St. Charles Borromeo. Yet it was so, and the *débonnaire* Doctor of Divinity who came in after the manner of "the bounding Achilles," when he lightly "stepped o'er the plain of the daffydowndillies," and who, impetuously kneeling to receive Dr. Manning's hearty welcome in the shape of a blessing, and then rising quickly, plunged at once into the liveliest conversation with his chief and with the others gathered round him, was Herbert Vaughan, D.D., destined to be the successor of Cardinal Manning in his high office.

I did not see Dr. Vaughan until years afterwards. I was married and living at Edgware, and he was Principal of the College of St. Joseph's at Mill Hill. I shall never forget his kindness and active sympathy with myself and

family during a period of sadness which does not enter into this record.¹

His Eminence may call to mind, that, soon after he was made Bishop of Salford, I met him on the platform of the Mill Hill station, and not knowing exactly what might be the proper etiquette to be observed when saluting him in his new dignity, whether I ought to kneel, kiss the episcopal ring, ask a blessing and so forth,—for, in the presence of any eminent ecclesiastic, I was always as nervous as Sydney Smith, who said “he invariably crumbled his bread on the table when he was dining with a bishop,”—I compromised the matter by putting the question to him thus, *tout court*,

“Well, and how do you like being a bishop?”

I remember his Lordship taking it most good-humouredly, laughing heartily, and replying that “on the whole he thought he was getting on very well.” So he was.

Forty-five years ago the representatives of the older Catholic clergy in England had very little in outward appearance to differentiate them from Low-Church parsons. Canon O’Neil and Mr. Tierney,—all “secular” priests were “Mister” then, and should be so now, as the title “Father” ought only to be given to “Regulars,”—and several others whom I saw at that time, men of about sixty years of age, wore either black stocks and no collars, or white ties and low waistcoats, and looked like well-to-do farmers on a visit to town, rather than clergy and dignitaries of the Church. They were very shy of using such names as “Oblates” or “Oratorians,” regarding them, in England, as somewhat “new-fangled,” and so preferred to speak of themselves as “Manningites” and “Faberites.” *A propos* of this latter name I well remember Father Faber, Superior of the Oratory, a very portly man,

¹ As I correct these proofs, I receive the sad news of Cardinal Vaughan’s death at Mill Hill College, June 19, 1903.

with a most charming manner and delightful smile. His extempore preaching, his easy style and graceful, impressive action in the pulpit had, for me at least, a remarkable fascination. Except the Protestant preacher Robertson, of Brighton, whom I can just remember, Canon Liddon, and Cardinal Manning when at his best, I can call to mind no one to whom I have listened with such pleasure as to Father Faber.

I remember once breakfasting at Cardinal Wiseman's house in York Place. I knew it was the etiquette to kneel on one knee on being presented to a Prince of the Church, and to kiss the ring on his third finger. For this ceremony I was prepared; I had thought it over; I had mentally rehearsed it. On entering the breakfast-room I saw a portly personage standing on the hearthrug, in a violet, or purple, cassock, and wearing a pectoral cross suspended round his neck by a gold chain. In a second I had made up my mind. "This," I said to myself, "is Cardinal Wiseman. Now for the genuflection and the kissing of his ring." So straight at him I went, head foremost, full butt for his portliness, and before he could make any show of resistance, I was on my knee in front of him, had seized his hand and kissed his ring, with such fervour as nearly sent its wearer backwards against the mantelpiece. "No, no, no!" I heard him feebly remonstrating as I staggered up on to my feet again, and I "heard a smile" from two or three ecclesiastics, who had followed me into the room, but who had reserved their salutations for the proper object, that is the Cardinal himself, who was standing apart in a recess by the window, chatting pleasantly with Dr. Manning. My humble obeisance had been bestowed on Monsignor Serle (or Searle), and being very much flushed and confused by this *contretemps*, when the real Simon Pure turned towards me, and bidding me welcome, extended his hand with the episcopal ring *en*

evidence, I could only shake it very heartily, and hope his Eminence was in the best of health ; which proceeding, as I need hardly add, caused such laughter at my expense, that the ice of formality was entirely melted, and we were all put at our ease by the kindly geniality of the thoroughly English cardinal. That is my unique recollection of Cardinal Wiseman.

When the hour came that I was compelled to declare that I had no " vocation " for the priesthood, Dr. Manning was at first reluctant to let me go forth into the world and fight my way. The story of my interview with him, as I have seen it in print, without any authorisation from me (and " how these things get into the papers " is a greater mystery to me than ever it was to Mr. Vincent Crummies), I will now tell plainly and clearly ; " I will nothing extenuate or set down aught in malice."

I had determined to leave the Oblates House. There was the Law awaiting me ; my dinners, so to speak, were half eaten already, and my terms almost all kept. Also I had already returned to dramatic writing, for, while coaching a pupil in Latin, I had been quietly making notes (after the manner of Gilbert Abbott à Beckett's *Comic History of Rome*) for a Virgilian burlesque. I remembered the A.D.C., and I thought that if all trades failed, surely I could try, as " a professional," my luck on " the boards," seeing that my career as an amateur had been a decided success. That after quitting the hospitable Oblates, whose guest I had been for over three months, I must earn money, was evident, and it seemed to me that to " go upon the stage " was the shortest and least expensive way of achieving that end. Having settled this in my own mind, I had to thank Dr. Manning and his Oblates for their great kindness, and then take my departure. The only persons to whom I confided my intention were my friends, Walter Richards (now, I think, the

“Very Reverend” and Government Diocesan School Inspector), Willie Manning (the Cardinal’s nephew, long ago dead), and James Marshall, subsequently Sir James Marshall, Chief-Justice of the Gold Coast, who, all three of them, like the captain in the ballad of Billy Taylor, “Werry much applauded” my decision, and wished me good luck.

So to Dr. Manning in his ascetic little room I went. The interview was decidedly a difficult one, not exactly painful; but he was disappointed in me, and I had a kind of feeling, when in his presence, that I was choosing a line in life very inferior to the one that he would have selected for me, but upon which only those who have a “vocation” can venture to enter. “Vocation,” as most of my readers will be aware, in its special religious sense signifies being “called” to the priesthood or to a professedly religious life, whether it be that of a “secular” or “regular.” The conversation between Dr. Manning and myself somewhat languished. I had nothing to say. Dr. Manning thought a good deal; sniffed occasionally, as was his habit, at the same time moving his closed lips from side to side as if arguing with himself on both sides of the question. Then he spoke. He pointed out to me what I was renouncing; how afterwards I might regret it; how I had originally intended to be an Anglican clergyman, and how this idea of mine could only receive its full development by my becoming a Catholic priest. There were several steps, it was true, and I should be yet some time before I received “minor orders” and proceeded to the subdiaconate. It would be three years or more ere I could be ordained priest. To decide so grave a question in haste was perilous. “Would it not be better to wait—to wait? eh?—and not to—decide too hastily?” Certainly he, Dr. Manning, would be the last to urge me to a step that was irrevocable, but between now and that particular

time there would be, as he had pointed out, an interval of months, nay of years, for I was only twenty-one—"yes, exactly that—and any step now taken in a hurry—well—well—" and so forth. But I was firm. I believed that I was not acting hurriedly, *and I was absolutely certain that I had no "vocation."*

"Ah!" repeated Dr. Manning, raising his eyebrows, and nodding gravely towards the fireplace, in front of which he was now seated. "No vocation,—hem. It is a solemn thing; very solemn."

"But," I humbly and timidly ventured to object, for I was, I admit it, dreadfully nervous—"but, Dr. Manning, there are other vocations—not to the priesthood."

He looked round at me as if quite surprised. Then again regarded the fire musingly, nursing his knee.

"Other vocations?" he repeated, as if courting an explanation, either from me or the fireplace.

"Yes—there are," I replied, becoming hotter and hotter as approaching the "burning question," "there are—other vocations."

"Well, well," he murmured, stroking his chin; "and what," he asked, slowly dwelling on every word, as he resumed his swaying movement, and addressing himself to the fire in the first place, and to me incidentally—"and—what—what—what—*are*—these 'other vocations'?"

I was taken aback. I knew what I meant. I knew that there was "the Bar," but I was equally aware that I could not hope to start there in my present penniless condition. Thus "cornered," I thought I could come out with what was in my mind at that time and so have done with it.

"I was thinking," I said tremblingly, and becoming hotter and more uncomfortable every second—"I was thinking"—

"Well—well," said Dr. Manning musingly, noticing my hesitation, but still taking the fire into our confidence as a third party to the interview. "Well—you—were—thinking—go on—go on."

"I was thinking, Dr. Manning," said I, taking my courage with both hands, "of—of," then I came out with it desperately, plump, "of going on the stage."

I had expected that this declaration would have blown him out of his chair; but it didn't. It didn't stir him; it didn't move him. Still he sniffed, still he moved his mouth, still he slowly stroked his chin, and then once more resumed his confidential communications with the fire. He did not look at me; he occasionally looked across me at nothing in particular; but his glance skimmed me and took off the cream of decision. Presently he murmured—

"Go — on — the — stage—hem —" Then he inquired, always musingly, "And you call *that* a vocation?"

"Well, Dr. Manning"—I began.

"My dear boy," he interrupted, with a somewhat impatient sniff, "you forget what 'a vocation' means. When *we* speak of 'a vocation,' we mean a vocation to the priesthood."

I ventured to protest that I was not ignorant of this fact, and that I thoroughly appreciated its gravity, but he continued calmly and dispassionately to define with admirable emphasis and lucidity the nature of a vocation. I listened attentively. I agreed entirely: I was in perfect accord. All I wanted to explain was that I had not used the word "vocation" in its highest sense. But Dr. Manning wouldn't admit the application of the word, as I had applied it, at all. I was becoming more and more nervous as I began to see that I should have to yield to the force of his reasoning, and should not be able, yet awhile, to decide for myself whether

I had, or had not, a vocation. I was simply melting away; so were my arguments. At last he wound up by recurring to my expressed intention of going on the stage.

"My dear boy," he said, sniffing briskly, as if now he were going to clench matters *hic et nunc*. "Consider that the question of 'vocation' is one for the individual soul. It is to be regarded only in the light of what is best for the soul." Here Dr. Manning paused, sniffed, and nursed his right knee, clasping it with both hands. Then, rocking himself, in measured rhythm as it were, slowly forwards and backwards, he continued, in his playfully sarcastic manner, "Why, you might as well say—that to be a—a—cobbler—is a 'vocation.'"

Whereupon nervously inspired I blurted out, "Well—er—a—a cobbler has a *great deal to do with the sole*."

The situation was too much for even Dr. Manning's gravity. In vain he tried with his hand to hide his smile; the smile would spread, and did. But he shook his head as he rose from his chair, and so gave me to understand that our interview was at an end. He raised his hand in benediction, and I knelt as he gave me his blessing. Then I went to my room; saw my friends; recounted the interview, and within a few days, after I had concluded the sale of my books (this is one of the "acts and deeds" in my life that I have never ceased to regret) to a professional purchaser (buying through my old friend the bookseller Dolman), I left the happy home at Bayswater, where often have I been since, "ever," like Joe Gargery and Pip, "the best of friends," though, alas! the Reaper with his scythe has been busy in the ranks of the Oblates of Saint Charles, and but two remain now of those who were in time of need so sympathetically kind, and generous to a fault; or to several faults and all mine. This deponent having given to the world the correct

version of the foregoing oft-told tale "again urges on his wild career," and quits the sanctuary of the seminary in order quite alone and unaided, with two friends and no fortune, to fight the battle of life and work for daily bread.

CHAPTER XIII

UNCERTAINTY—FRIENDS—EDINBURGH—QUINTIN TWISS—JOE ROBINS—LOUISE KEELEY—MONTAGU WILLIAMS—MRS. KEELEY—TOM PIERCE—FITZGERALD—GEORGE MEREDITH—“PATER” EVANS—DUFF-GORDONS—FRED. CHAPMAN—*ONCE A WEEK*—CHARLES KEENE—MARK LEMON

TWO friends? yes; my old college friend F. C. Wilson, ever ready in those days to put me up in his luxurious bachelor rooms in Conduit Street, and another friend, a dear, good fellow, Charles Donne, whose father, William Bodham Donne, the erudite and accomplished Quarterly Reviewer, Licensor of Plays, intimate with all the literary and dramatic notabilities of his time, did everything for me at the starting-point. As for other friends, Cantabs or Etonians, I could not reckon upon a single one. It was not their fault, neither was it my misfortune. Since quitting Cambridge I had entirely cut myself adrift from all my old college companions, even from such as were going to be clergymen, as most of these chose Wells for their theological college, and I met only one Cantab at Cuddesdon, and he left soon after my arrival. But the warm-hearted, cheerful Donne family supplied all my social needs. They were one and all of them genuine friends to me. Both they and Fred. Wilson would have willingly supplied me with funds had I needed it,

but the sale of my books had left me with money in hand "sufficient for the present distress." With Charles Donne's brother, Captain Donne, recently returned on sick leave from India, and recommended to tour about England, I went to Scotland. In Edinburgh we took very reasonable lodgings, he doing a lot of reading, and I a lot of writing, proceeding with the Virgilian burlesque that I had commenced to outline during my stay at Bayswater.

At this time the theatre was in full swing under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham, "Edinburgh Wyndham," as he was subsequently styled in order to differentiate Robert from Charles Wyndham, who, at that time, could have been only a beginner on the stage.

Before leaving town I had come across Quintin Twiss, whose acquaintance, as I have already told, I had made during a long vacation tour, and who, having been proposed by me, had become a member, a famous acting member, of the Cambridge A.D.C.; our Q. T. being an Oxford man. He had got a snug berth in the Treasury, and rather looked askance at me as a sort of chap who was gradually "going under."

At his mother's, Mrs. Horace Twiss, Quintin had become acquainted with all sorts of musical, literary, and dramatic celebrities, and when I told him how I was thinking of going on the stage and was about to take a tour due north with Captain Donne, he, becoming at once deeply interested in my welfare, told me that a friend of his, one Joseph Robins, had just got his first theatrical engagement at T. R., Edinburgh, and that to him ("Joe being a thorough gentleman," I remember well his adding) he would give me an introduction. Certainly; the very thing.

So, finding myself in Edinburgh town, the next thing was to discover the theatre and then make the acquaintance, per letter, of the, at that time, rising comedian, Joe Robins.

Now I had never seen him ; only heard of him. All I knew about him was that when Albert Smith and a party of amateurs produced an amateur pantomime, which was given at Drury Lane for some public charity, it was Joe Robins who had played clown, and of him it has been said, by all the elder critics, that never had there been such a clown since the days of Grimaldi ! Dickens records this fact, too, in a note to *The Life of Grimaldi*, which he edited and pre-faced.

But Grimaldis weren't required ; the new style of pantomime and the new clown, the dancing not the waddling clown, had come in ; the openings were becoming longer, and the comic scenes were being gradually reduced. Had this been a *reductio ad absurdum* the public might have benefited. But the "*absurdum*" has long ago been taken out of the "comic business," or, if it does remain, then few among the audience stay to see it.

I looked in the play-bill for the name of Joe Robins so as to be sure that a visit to the theatre would not be time wasted, and having discovered the name I set off to find the stage door and present Quintin Twiss's letter.

Joe Robins happened to be coming out from rehearsal just as I was asking the stage doorkeeper where I could find him. "Here's Mr. Robins," said the M'Cerberus, and there he was, and plenty of him too.

A stout, good-humoured, twinkling-eyed, red-faced, clean-shaven, red-gilled, typical royal coachman-looking sort of man was Joe Robins. He had been in some business and had come to grief. His friends had always told him that "he would make a fortune on the stage, he was so like Wright," the very eccentric and highly popular comedian of the Adelphi. And so he was, facially ; and when he spoke he could imitate Wright to perfection. But after that—when

he dropped Wright and gave us Robins—how we were all disillusioned !

On this occasion he was fairly genial, not immensely so, and forthwith began to lecture me on the difficulties the stage presented to a beginner, and how he had such natural advantages in his comical “ phisimahogany,” as he termed (*more* Wright) it, that not everybody possessed, and how Wright himself used always to say to him when they met, “ Joe, my boy, I shall cut you off with a shilling,” on account of this close resemblance. Robins promised to do what he could for me, and in course of conversation, which on his part consisted mainly of his talking to me in an easy, off-hand, familiar manner of “ Albert ” and “ Arthur ” (the two brothers Smith), “ Ned ” Yates, “ Tom ” Holmes, “ Old ” Keeley, and many others of his literary and artistic acquaintance (and didn’t I envy him ! to know all these people and speak of them so freely, too !), it happening to crop up that I had been at Eton—I think this was *à propos* of Charles Kean—he asked me if I knew Montagu Williams.

“ Why, he was at my tutor’s,” I informed him, rather surprised at the question.

“ Well, he’s here now, my boy,” said Joe ; “ he and his wife are both playing.”

“ Oh, he’s married, is he ? ” I asked, slightly interested.

“ Didn’t you know it ? ” exclaimed Joe Robins. “ He married Louise Keeley, old ‘ Bob ’ Keeley’s second daughter. Lucky chap, begad, sir.” Joe affected this old style ; always imitating Wright. “ He’s a great friend of Wyndham’s, and he’s the boy to put you in the right way if anyone can.”

Somehow this sounded encouraging. If an old Etonian (Montagu had been a “ Tug,” that is a Colleger, considerably my senior, and a pupil of Cookesley’s with me) could make such a start on the stage as this, wasn’t it *within* the limits of possibility that I might do likewise ?

I think I ought to pause here to recount how Montagu Williams, having fallen desperately in love with Louise Keeley, proposed to her in Dublin (I think when she was fulfilling an engagement and he was on tour with a "professional-amateur," Captain Disney Roebuck), where they were married. Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, in London, were left in utter ignorance of the event, for Louise, then, as afterwards, a fascinating little actress, inheriting the true *vis comica* of her inimitable parents, was earning her own living, and was an entirely independent young lady. The Keeleys were a specimen of a thoroughly united family as long as they never came together. Had Montagu Williams formulated a request to old Bob Keeley for the hand of his daughter, he would have been refused for certain, unless Mrs. Keeley had first intimated that she was against the match, when the odds were that Mr. Keeley would have championed the proposal. However, as it happened, both were "ignorant of this knowledge," and were not asked to "applaud the deed."

But Louise had her own peculiar way of managing matters. She was not going to keep her marriage a secret; not she! So up she came to town, and, knowing that her mother was sure to walk down Piccadilly towards the theatre on a certain day at a certain hour, she stationed herself close to the entrance of the Burlington Arcade, and, before she had been there many minutes, Mrs. Keeley descended from her Brompton omnibus, and commenced the rest of her *trajet* on foot.

Suddenly up stepped her daughter.

"Mamma!" cried Louise, pleasantly enough.

"Good Heaven, Louise!" exclaimed Mrs. Keeley, startled.

"I thought you were in Dublin! What on earth"—

"Mamma," said Louise, coming to business in a straightforward way, "I'm married."

"Good God!" exclaimed Mrs. Keeley, and straightway sat down, flop, on the pavement.

It was the action of David Copperfield's aunt in real life. The old couple were soon reconciled to the marriage, and "young Bob" (Montagu Williams was a Robert) soon became a great favourite with "old Bob," his father-in-law, the inimitable Robert Keeley.

My visit to Edinburgh resulted in a trial trip on the stage. It *was* a "trip" with a vengeance, and, to employ masonic language, "it proved a slip." Montagu Williams was working hard to promote his wife's benefit at the T. R., Edinburgh. What a start it would be for me to play in a farce with Miss Louise Keeley, "the fair *bénéficiaire*"! I had not been on any stage since quitting Cambridge, and was very nervous as to accepting the magnificent offer. If I made a hit, why, there I was, with an engagement at Robert Wyndham's theatre! If I didn't—well, there I wasn't. However, before I had actually decided on the step, my name as "Tom Pierce" (under which I had always played at the A.D.C.) was announced in large letters on the bills. I was utterly astonished. I had never for one moment intended to appear as an amateur "star"! I think Montagu described me as "a distinguished amateur." I protested; but it was too late. The die was cast: so was the piece. I had to "mug up" the farce in a couple of days,—a farce I knew nothing at all about; to rehearse it without the slightest assistance from anyone except from Louise Keeley where her own "business" with me was concerned, and at the great disadvantage of not having played anywhere for over a year, and only seen one or two pieces. All I remember is that, before a crowded house, the performance came off and I came off too, not a "distinguished" but an "extinguished" amateur. That settled my professional aspirations. Henceforward to me "the pen was to be mightier" than the boards. As

ill-luck would have it, an uncle and aunt of mine, with a travelling party on their way, after a tour, to London, stopped at Edinburgh that night, and saw the bill of the play displayed at their hotel. The name of "Tom Pierce," in the ordinary course of events, would not have attracted their attention or drawn them to the theatre, had it not been that unfortunately my Uncle Arthur was blessed with an excellent memory, and he said to himself first and to my aunt afterwards, "Surely I've heard that name before."

Then they considered and remembered having read one of my privately published and printed pieces "as produced at the A.D.C.," where their charming nephew was identified with "Tom Pierce." They sent for seats, but, as it happened, every place was taken. The "Ben" was a "bumper." They saw the report of the performance in the paper next morning, which was more than I did, as, not daring to look a newspaper in the face, I had hurried my companion off to the station, and, by the earliest possible train, we had left Edinburgh behind us. Scotland stood where it did, but the ex-amateur, Tom Pierce, having "left but his name" behind him, had resumed his own style and bearing, and F. C. Burnand had bidden farewell—a long farewell—to "Tom Pierce," who, in fact, was buried in Edinburgh. As Dibdin sings, to his readers,

"Even you, the story hearing,
With a sigh may cry—Poor Tom!"

"*Resurgam*" was not inscribed on his tomb, and the writer of these recollections has never heard of him since that most fortunate *fiasco*.

At this time, my finances being at a very low ebb, friends in my need were friends indeed. Always had I a home at dear old Mr. William Bodham Donne's house, and a delightful

host he was, full of anecdote ; to know *him* " was in itself a liberal education." However, as about this time I had obtained from my father the concession of a small allowance (to which, as I afterwards learned, I had a fair claim) in consideration of my resuming my dinners at Lincoln's Inn, which implied restarting on the road to the Lord Chancellorship, I could once again, like Mr. Micawber when in funds, " look my fellow-man in the face," and the first " fellow-man " I stumbled upon was an old college companion, whose " people " were on most intimate terms with the Donne family. This was Maurice Fitzgerald. He invited me to come and stay with him at Esher. As term time was over, and as there were, for the nonce, no dinners at Lincoln's Inn, and no lectures, and as I could now reckon on six pounds six shillings and eightpence, paid monthly, I accepted with pleasure.

" 'Twas in the prime of summer-time," as the Eugene Aram poem commences, when I paid my first visit to Esher. As we walked across the common, Maurice expatiated on the beauty of the country, of the advantages of rural life over existence in town, talked charmingly, quoting classics occasionally, and, in fact, astonishing me, who only knew him as an unobtrusive undergraduate, an excellent whist-player, very fond of a quiet game of " Cambridge Loo," and perversely preferring his own line of reading to that which was essential to obtaining a degree. He never entitled himself to add " B.A." to his name, and was not a penny worse for the omission. Maurice was a first-rate scholar, a gentle Sybarite, and a skilled *gourmet*. There was not a subject on which he could not speak well and wisely.

" I thought," he observed, breaking off in the midst of a vivid description of the beauties of the Box Hill and Dorking country—" I thought we should have met George."

"Who is George?" I asked.

"George Meredith," he answered. "I forgot to tell you that he is stopping with me, or I am with him. It doesn't much matter. We've been together for some time. You know him?"

No, I didn't.

"You know," Maurice put it to me inquiringly, "his *Shaving of Shagpat* and his poems?"

I regretted to say that, owing to my studies having been for the last year or more on subjects removed far away from modern literature, I had scarcely looked at any new books for the past eighteen months.

"Ah!" said Maurice reflectively; "you must read his *Richard Feverel*. I've got it and the others at home."

Then we saw a figure standing in front of a white gate on our left, about a quarter of a mile distant, waving to us.

"There he is," said Maurice quietly (he was always quiet); "we shall meet him where the roads join at the corner."

As we neared the "crossways" (no "Diana" there as yet), George Meredith was shaking hands with a stoutish, jovial-looking, rubicund-visaged, white-haired gentleman, who if he had only been attired in gaiters might there and then have been easily taken for the original of Phiz's delineation of the immortal Mr. Pickwick.

George Meredith and this genial elderly gentleman waved their hands encouragingly to one another as the latter disappeared within the gate, and George strode towards us. George Meredith never merely walked, never lounged; he strode, he took giant strides. He had on a soft, shapeless wide-awake, a sad-coloured flannel shirt, with low open collar turned over a brilliant scarlet neckerchief tied in loose sailor's knot; no waistcoat, knickerbockers, grey stockings,

and the most serviceable laced boots, which evidently meant business in pedestrianism; crisp, curly, brownish hair, ignorant of parting; a fine brow, quick, observant eyes, greyish—if I remember rightly—beard and moustache, a trifle lighter than the hair. A splendid head; a memorable personality. Then his sense of humour, his cynicism, and his absolutely boyish enjoyment of mere fun, of any pure and simple absurdity. His laugh was something to hear; it was of short duration, but it was a roar; it set you off,—nay, he himself, when much tickled, would laugh till he cried (it didn't take long to get to the crying), and then he would struggle with himself, hand to open mouth, to prevent another outburst.

Two more delightful companions for a young man, trembling on the brink of literature and the drama, it would be difficult to imagine. They were both my hosts. I was at home at once.

"Who were you talking to as we came up?" asked Maurice.

"That," said George—"why you've met him"—No, Maurice didn't remember—"that's Evans, dear old 'Pater' Evans."

And it was in this company, in these circumstances, that I first set eyes on Mullet Evans, second partner in the old publishing firm of "Bradbury & Evans," then known all over the world as "the proprietors of *Punch*." At this time they had among other ventures started *Once a Week* as a rival to Dickens's *All the Year Round*, and George Meredith was writing for this opposition his *Evan Harrington*. George scouted the suggestion that his novel should be called *Bradbury-and-Evans Harrington*.

Our near neighbours were the Duff-Gordons, at whose house George was a *persona grata*. As Maurice did not affect society, and as I was "a person of no importance,"

neither of us, though formally introduced, was included in the invitations sent to George Meredith, then a rising star, by Sir Alexander and Lady Duff-Gordon.

A far more congenial person to our Bohemian tastes was Frederick Chapman, who had taken a small house in the meadows by the little river Mole, not far from Cardinal Wolsey's tower. Very pleasant company we met there, and it was a delightful summer-time walk from Esher Common to this cottage. Through this association I obtained my first introduction to the Bouverie Street publishers. Thus it happened. I had told George Meredith some stories which he found sufficiently amusing to warrant him in placing them, told in his own inimitable language and style, before the public in the pages of *Once a Week*. Now George never informed me of his design, and made use of them without a "with your leave, or by your leave." It was after our trio at Esher was broken up that I found these stories of mine in *Once a Week*, whereupon, seeing a point to be scored for myself, I wrote to George, asking him as a set-off against the "honorarium" he had received for *my* stories ("only infinitely better told") to recommend a story of mine to the editor. George replied, expressing his regret, excusing himself by saying that he never thought I was going to make capital out of them (here he was right), and that he would have great pleasure in submitting my story to the *Once a Week* editor. *Ainsi dit, ainsi fait*, and my first appearance in magazine form was as the author of a story about a practical joke (its title I have forgotten), admirably illustrated by Charles Keene, whose acquaintance, years afterwards, I was to make at the "Punch Table." So George and myself cried quits. This introduction was of some use to me as acquainting Mark Lemon, who, as Mr. Punch's editor, was *au courant* with all the *Once a Week* affairs, with my name, of which, indirectly, he was soon to hear from a totally different

quarter. Mark Lemon, as he long afterwards informed me, had been very much amused by the story.

The Esher stay terminated. "We three" went our ways. Perhaps I may have something more to say as to Maurice Fitzgerald, about whom there are good stories not a few.

CHAPTER XIV

REST—NOVELTY—1858—THEATRES—LINCOLN'S
INN—ROBSON—*MEDEA*—*DIDO*—LACY, KIND
AND CRAFTY—MY RIGHTS—MY WRONGS—
CHARLES YOUNG—CHATTERTON—WILLERT
—MISS WYNDHAM—ST. JAMES'S THEATRE—
FIRST NIGHT—FIRST PIECE—CRITICS—MAR-
RIAGE—TERM-KEEPING—H. J. BYRON—E.
L. BLANCHARD—KEELEY—MONTAGU
WILLIAMS—ROBSON AND EMDEN—OLYMPIC
—THE BENICIA BOY—FEATHERS IN CAP

FROM the time of my quitting Cambridge up to my leaving St. Charles's, Bayswater, I had not concerned myself with theatricals, nor do I remember during that period of twelve months ever having entered a theatre, or seen, or read, a play. Theatrical criticisms and notices were unknown to me then, and I had not been taking the slightest interest in anything theatrical, either professional or amateur. I corresponded with no one at Cambridge, and knew nothing whatever as to the doings of the A.D.C. after my retirement from the general management of its stage business. So when I returned to London the theatres were to me a delightful novelty, and it was not often that I could afford to treat myself to a dress-circle seat, although the prices in 1858 were still moderate and the proportions of the pit; in most theatres, were not as yet reduced in order to convert

the front rows into orchestra stalls. The Haymarket theatre was celebrated for its critical pit, while the pit of the Lyceum at Christmas time, when Madame Vestris produced one of Planché's extravaganzas preceded by a couple of farces of which Charles Mathews was the life and soul, was something marvellous to see, so jammed and crowded was it.

Lincoln's Inn dinners were early,—at five, I think,—and so it was quite easy for us "students," to whom "the play's the thing" for recreation, to be in the theatre for the commencement at seven. In what pieces I then saw Robson performing I am not sure, but of one thing I am certain, and that is that I never saw him play the burlesque of *Medea* until it was for a short run revived some considerable time afterwards. Ignorant of this I had, as I have said, hit upon a burlesque on the subject of *Dido*; perhaps I was taking revenge on the classics. At all events I wrote it, and Mr. William Bodham Donne, having sacrificed himself to the petition of his family on my behalf, and having actually read it in manuscript, having also heard many of its songs performed with solos and choruses by his domestic circle, most kindly undertook to show it to "little Robson" when next he went to the Olympic. Even to appear to patronise burlesque must have been greatly against the grain with Mr. Donne, who never lost an opportunity of severely attacking this class of theatrical entertainment, though he invariably excepted Planché's classical extravaganzas from his otherwise sweeping condemnation. He thought, perhaps on account of its classical subject, that my *Dido* might be regarded with some slight favour; anyway he sincerely wanted to "give me a lift," and to put me in the way of earning a livelihood.

Robson read it, liked it, but returned it with a message to its author, *per* Mr. Donne, saying that "had he not so recently played *Medea* he would have been delighted to

attempt *Dido*," So I retired to my bachelor lodging in Sidney Street, Fulham Road, where I was living very carefully on an allowance which I thought just sufficient, but of which Joe Robins, I well remember, emphatically expressed his opinion as being "d——d handsome," and the next day on my way down to the Temple lectures (it was during the October term time) I called in with the manuscript of *Dido* at 89 Strand, the theatrical bookselling shop, kept by one Thomas Hailes Lacy. Now I was well known to Lacy by name, not by sight, as when at Cambridge I had ordered all our play-books for the A.D.C. from him, I had recommended the club to purchase his series of plays, about sixty volumes or more, and I had also confided the printing of my two farces, *Romance under Difficulties*, *In for a Holiday*, and my burlesques of *Villikins and his Dinah* and *Lord Lovel and Lady Nancy* to him, as he had undertaken to charge me nothing for printing, to supply us at Cambridge with such copies as we might want, and that he would also place them on his list. It cost me nothing; my vanity was gratified; and he was satisfied. It never occurred to me, verdant youth that I was, that he was not going to do this without the venture being well worth his while. So when I introduced myself to Mr. Lacy, who, in his dirty shirt sleeves, was muddling about with books and papers in a very ill-lighted and grimy shop, he welcomed me and shook hands in the heartiest manner. It was over a year of course since he had had any play of mine, and it now struck me that he might like to purchase those he had printed, and at the same time he could, an' he would, give me advice as to how to get *Dido* on to the London boards.

After some consideration with his spectacles on the top of his head, and after rumpling his hair in order to stimulate his brain-power, he looked at me craftily, and said, while examining the manuscript of my burlesque—

"Um—I'm afraid there's not much chance—but I'll read it and let you know."

I told him Robson's opinion of it.

"Oh, *he's* seen it, has he?" he observed in a discouraging tone. "Um—well—I'll read it." And it disappeared into a drawer. Then I thought I would approach the delicate subject of money; so very diffidently and with some nervous circumlocution, the object of which was quite apparent to this astute old stager, I inquired whether he would be inclined to purchase outright those pieces he had printed for me in the halcyon A.D.C. days, when neither time nor money was of any particular importance to his present visitor, as, if so, I should be glad to sell them there and then, being, "not to put too fine a point upon it," confoundedly hard up.

He deliberated. He didn't say "no thank you" right out; there was some comfort in that. He put his hands in his pockets, and after rattling some money in an irritating and, to so impecunious a suitor as I was, a somewhat tantalising manner, he said—

"Well, you know, I printed 'em for you for nothing." I admitted the fact, gratefully. "I shouldn't have done that unless I had considered there was some promise in them" (if he had said "performance" instead of "promise," he would have been nearer the truth, as I afterwards discovered).

"For amateurs," I humbly suggested.

"Yes," he replied cautiously, as if debating the probable "profit and loss" account of the venture; "I can put 'em on my list for amateurs, of course—well—I don't mind"—this with most provoking hesitation—"buying the lot." (O joy! O rapture! O my profit-propheying soul! this was better than "my uncle.") "What do you want for them?"

Now here was "a facer." I hadn't the very smallest idea of their marketable value. In my ignorance, and in my

modesty, I was compelled to say, with deferential politeness, that I would leave it to him.

Once more he hummed and ha'd, and again performed a fantasia on the keys and coppers in his breeches' pockets. Then he observed that "he couldn't be buyer and seller too," which struck me as a very fair and honest remark, besides being one that left me exactly where I was before it was uttered.

There were four plays — two farces, two burlesques. There was, Lacy pointed out to me, the cost of printing and so forth ; and that is about as far as I got in my calculations. It never occurred to me that amateurs *would pay fees for performances* ; it never occurred to me that professionals *would pay fees to Lacy for performing such plays on his list* as stood apart and separate from those on the list of the Dramatic Authors' Society, where the value of plays was assessed at so much an act. In fact I was a total greenhorn in such matters, and I thought, judging from the grimy appearance of the shop, that the theatrical bookseller only made a small and hardly earned profit out of the sixpenny plays he sold over the counter. That being so, when, on my being totally unable to name a price for the lot, Lacy suggested that, without seriously injuring his own family or absolutely forcing himself to retire to a workhouse, he might venture on the risk of giving three pounds apiece for the copyright of the four plays, I accepted readily, and gladly signed a deed, which, curiously enough, was forthcoming on the instant, making over to him all my rights, whatever they might be. Then from his grudging hand I received the cash, which, being pocketed, I went my way elated and rejoicing. For was it not the first money I had earned by dramatic composition ? But how far greater would my satisfaction have been had I then received a fair proportion of the amount that these early efforts of mine *had been earning in provincial theatres ever since Mr. Lacy had first printed*

them two years before ? These plays of mine were on "Lacy's List," and could be played by the country companies—not travelling companies alone, but regular companies at well-established provincial theatres—for a less sum than was charged by the Dramatic Authors' Society for their pieces. Consequently, as the song of "Villikins and his Dinah" had been rendered popular by Robson, so my burlesque for four principal characters, yet admitting of development in super and chorus department, was a sure attraction at a considerable number of country theatres. The fees for these performances had already found their way into Mr. Lacy's pocket, and he had been only awaiting my making the rights, acting rights, past, present, and future, with the copyright, over to him in order that his claim on the fees from the very first might be undisputed. Instead of his giving me three pounds apiece for them, to have given me fifteen pounds *on account* of country performances would have been nearer the mark. It was a long time ere I made this discovery ; and I suppose that Lacy thought he had sufficiently condoned his sharp practice by taking my burlesque of *Dido* and doing his best towards placing it on the London stage. It was not long ere I received a letter from him, asking me to call on him at 89 Strand. I did so. He introduced me to Mr. Charles Young, the leading comedian at the St. James's Theatre, then under the management of Messrs. Willert and F. B. Chatterton, with Miss Wyndham as directress.

Charles Young had come over here from Australia, and happening to be on the lookout for such a burlesque part as Robson would have played, *Dido* offered him exactly what he required. He had read it to the management. Miss Wyndham also had read it. The decision was in its favour ; and if I would call on Messrs. Willert and Chatterton at the St. James's Theatre, terms could be settled there and then. Need I say I jumped at the chance.

I called, and was introduced to the joint proprietors in a side-room, on the ground floor of the theatre. Willert was an abrupt-mannered man, with rather a cast in his eye (very appropriate this for a theatrical manager); Chatterton was a stout, light-haired, thick-speaking individual, occasionally a trifle deaf, that is whenever he wanted a few seconds for considering his answer to your question. They came to the point at once. They "liked the piece," and so forth. They were prepared to give me "twenty-five pounds down" (what a temptation in that word "down"!) for the first twenty-five performances, and then a pound per night for the remainder of the run. Needless to say I closed with the terms, which were better than I, absolutely a novice in such matters, quite alone, and with not a soul to advise me, could have devised.

Since these early days, and since my many experiences, I have, whenever the opportunity offered, invariably advised a young and inexperienced author as to the terms he ought to make. But to proffer advice now is useless; never have I for the last twenty years come across a commencing dramatist, in the very earliest stage of cutting his first drama, who was not quite prepared to propose such terms as would stagger a manager, and to accept such modifications as, if the piece were successful, would if properly invested insure him a competence for life, while subsequent successes would provide him with all the luxuries that a healthy, wealthy, and wise man could desire. But never, "in the whole course of my professional experience," have I come across one author, with his first marketable piece, so utterly "green" and so friendless as I was at this time. "Friendless" except for the Donnes; but concerning the prices that dramatists asked and received, Mr. W. B. Donne knew little, and could not have advised me. Naturally enough I was too eager to "sign, seal, and deliver" on the spot to risk my chance by searching for advice.

What I did not know at that time was that to Mark Lemon, first editor of *Punch* and my future kind friend, had been given this burlesque of mine by Miss Wyndham, who often consulted him (as I found out afterwards) on theatrical matters, and that by his advice she had accepted it, and had cast herself for the part of *Anna, sister of Queen Dido*.

Oh, those first rehearsals! What a novelty! What a delightful time! Fascinating, clever, and charming Miss Wyndham! Elegant and attractive Miss Murray, whom I had seen playing in the "legitimate" drama with Charles Kean at the Princess's, and who afterwards married that most amusing of amateurs, Sam Brandram, one of the very best of all the professional brotherhood of "reciters."

We began our rehearsals in the last week of January 1860, finished in the second week of February, and on the 11th *Dido* was successfully produced.

Never shall I forget the morning after, the *première* Sunday, when my host, Fred. Wilson, at whose rooms I was staying, bought the Sunday papers. We had been so "happy and glorious" after the great success of Saturday night, and then "what a fall was there" on Sunday morning!

The critic who "slated" me most fiercely was Edmund Yates in a Sunday paper (I forget which it was, probably *The Observer*), and the next day he repeated the slashing in the *Daily News*. Someone had told me how Yates had spotted a strong Cambridge contingent of A.D.C. men and personal friends, who overdid the applause, and whose boyishly warm-hearted but injudicious conversation in the lobbies, and as they left the theatre, had been overheard and resented not only by Edmund, but also by not a few pressmen, and by some established writers of burlesque, who regarded me as a "cocky young university man," and a kind of amateur interloper. The professional critics, who at that time hung together (I could have hung them all together, and strung

them up with pleasure) more than is their wont nowadays, and used to foregather after a "first night" at the Arundel and such-like Bohemian clubs, of whose existence I was at that time totally ignorant, were more or less hostile towards me as interfering with the business of Frank Talfourd, Planché, the Brothers Brough, Leicester Buckingham (himself a critic), Kenny, Byron, and some others of their *confrères*. Not one single critic among them did I know; not one of them knew *me*. I was totally unacquainted with journalism; and in the theatrical world I knew only the managers and company of the St. James's. I had to fight my own battle, absolutely alone, and I was quite willing to do so. And what happened? *Dido* ran for nearly eighty nights (a hundred nights was then quite exceptional), and I found that, though the remuneration was not great, I had distinctly made a fair start as a dramatic author.

By the following Easter, my prospects being bright, I had married and settled, still in Sidney Street, where I remained until we found a countrified-looking little place in Park Walk, Fulham Road,—anything but countrified now,—and "set up" for ourselves; my time being divided between writing for the stage, attending lectures in the Temple, and "keeping" the last of my terms by attending the dinners at Lincoln's Inn.

Soon after the production of *Dido* I went into Lacy's for some play-book, and waited to speak to the proprietor until he had finished a conversation in which he was engaged with a tall, slight young man, rather pale (I could just see his profile), who was leaning against the counter, stroking and pulling at his moustache while listening to Lacy, who, however, on seeing me, broke off in the midst of his eloquence, and said—

"Ah, Mr. Burnand, I don't think you know Mr. Byron—Mr. H. J. Byron?" and he indicated the tall gentleman,

who, turning towards me in the friendliest manner and with a peculiarly whimsical smile, shook hands with me, congratulated me on *Dido*, and expressed himself as greatly pleased at making my acquaintance. It was a proud moment for me when the most popular burlesque writer of the day, whose works, bristling with puns, sparkling with witticisms, and ringing with the pleasantest tunes, spoken, sung, danced, and acted by one of the best, if not the very best, burlesque company that ever trod the boards of the Strand or of any other theatre, congratulated me on my success, and encouraged me in my work.

"Are you a member of the Arundel?" he inquired.

No, I was not. I had never heard of the Arundel. Oh, he would propose me. Who would second me? Did I know Blanchard? or Palgrave Simpson? No, I knew absolutely nobody. I knew their names, of course. And then, as luck would have it, who should come in, as "if to a cue," but dear old E. L. Blanchard, one of the gentlest of clever critics, who for years distributed his work over *Era*, *Daily Telegraph*, and other papers of all sorts and sizes, London and provincial, the kindest-mannered man that ever murdered his aspirates. What Blanchard did not know in theatrical life, and in journalism generally, was not worth picking up.

Certainly he would "second" me for the Arundel, and he would take me to several merry gatherings of authors, actors, and pressmen; and as Byron was staying for a business conversation with Lacy, E. L. Blanchard, whose way lay Fleet-Streetwards, accompanied me to Chancery Lane, all the way talking cheerily, and letting me into some of the mysteries of press-craftsmanship. I complained to him of (as I considered it) the cruel slashing my piece had received at the hands of some of his brother journalists. He laughed lightly; observed it was nothing; that "if

the piece was going well what did it matter ? ” and significantly added—

“ You see, my dear boy, if you only *knew* these chaps ” (mentioning them by name) “ you would find them quite different. However, you’ll meet them all at the Arundel.”

Blanchard for many years had written the pantomime for Drury Lane, and I rather think for Sadler’s Wells also. He was known as “ the hero of a hundred pantomimes.”

Before we left Sidney Street, Montagu Williams and his wife had come to live in Brompton, so as to be near his wife’s family, the Keeleys, who were then living in Brompton Square. Mary Keeley had married Albert Smith, who was still giving his entertainment of *Mont Blanc* at the Egyptian Hall, while she was playing in a burlesque of Sardanapalus and in farces at the Adelphi; and Louise Keeley, her sister (Mrs. Montagu Williams), was also making considerable way in her profession at the Princess’s, at the Haymarket, and, I fancy, at the Olympic.

Montagu Williams was doing nothing in particular; at least, like myself, he was attending law lectures and keeping his terms at the Temple, as I was doing at Lincoln’s Inn. Anyway we forgathered. After a brief but varied career as an usher in a school, as an officer in a line regiment, and as an actor, amateur and professional, having married into the Keeley family, he and his wife soon found themselves on the friendliest terms with most of the “ heads of the profession ” in London, and it was a very easy matter for “ Bob ” Williams to get the *entrée* to any theatre, or to any manager’s sanctum, with an introduction from the other Bob, his father-in-law, Robert Keeley.

One day, not so very long after the production of *Dido*, and during its run, Montagu Williams came to me bursting with an idea. He literally gasped with excitement.

“ What is it ? ” I asked.

"The Benicia Boy," he blurted out excitedly. Everyone was talking about this celebrated prize-fighter, who was coming over, or who had come over, to meet the English champion, Tom Sayers.

"I've got a first-rate idea for a farce!" he cried. Then he told me what fun must come out of the notion of some harmless person, in a farce, being mistaken for the redoubtable pugilist.

"Your father-in-law is the man for it," I said at once, but this was, I found, impossible. I forget whether he were "resting" or had retired, but I do remember that when we had hit on our plot and had written the piece, Mr. Keeley said he wished such a farce had been offered to him in his best days.

We set to work. I incline to the opinion that we both of us went to our "lecture" and our "dinner" during the day, that I returned early, and that Montagu came to me about seven in the evening; and that there and then we began our work, one walking and talking and the other sitting and writing, alternately, until, at about four o'clock in the morning, the farce was finished. Before midday, Montagu had taken the manuscript to Mrs. Keeley, who, having read it, and being delighted with it, went straight off, manuscript in hand, to Messrs. Robson and Emden, who by the following day had accepted it, paid for it (alas! a miserable sum! why didn't Mrs. Keeley tell her son-in-law what to ask for it! So after all I hadn't much to complain of as to lacking friends when I priced *Dido*), and it was immediately put into rehearsal at the Olympic Theatre.

I shall never forget Robson's rehearsing. The farce played about "forty minutes" (so registered in printed copy), but every rehearsal occupied us, at first, during a full three hours, that is from eleven till two.

Robson, the funniest and roundest little figure, with

large head, tiny hands and feet, with the brightest smile and a merry chuckle in his voice, invariably arriving late, would proceed to explain how it was he had not come punctually, and this was cut short by his partner in the management, Emden, who was not unlike the "early" D'Israeli in face and in ringlets, and was a spare man with a decided and business-like manner.

"Of course, get to business," assented Robson, becoming all at once overpoweringly in earnest.

He stood with us, the authors, on the stage with his back to the pit. Emden was stage manager.

We commenced. Mrs. Emden began, and everything would be going on smoothly, when Robson would suddenly exclaim—

"Stop!"—then turning first to Emden and then to us, he would say apologetically, "I beg your pardon for interrupting—but—that table"—we all regarded the table—what was the matter?"—"Well—when I come on—where do I put my bag?"

Emden would remonstrate with him. "Let us wait till his entrance, then he would see."

"Yes," Robson objected, "but it will save time *then* if it's arranged *now*."

However willing as were the young authors to humour, even obsequiously, the great little actor (the most wonderful tragic-comedian I have ever seen), Emden, who knew his partner by heart, would not allow him to upset the rehearsal in a scene with which he had nothing to do, especially as Mrs. Emden was occupying the stage at that moment. So Robson bottled himself up and corked himself down for another five or ten minutes, when he had to rehearse his own scene. He was the despair of a stage manager. It was impossible to fix him to any position for two seconds together. He would devise "business," and immediately afterwards

forget all about it ; then on being reminded, he would roar with laughter as if he were hearing a capital joke for the first time. All the " business " he thoroughly enjoyed ; but after a time this repetition and his forgetfulness caused those who were on the stage with him to become very weary of any piece, no matter how humorous it might be.

At last it was produced, and proved one of Robson's greatest successes. The authors never received a bonus from the generous managers, who made hundreds out of the farce for which they had paid only twenty-five pounds. But for an entirely unknown novice in dramatic authorship to have two successful pieces running contemporaneously at the very commencement of his career, was a matter of no small self-congratulation, although, neither from the one of which he was " part " author, nor from the other of which he was sole author, was the pecuniary benefit so enormous as to warrant him in deciding, there and then, to work solely and only for the stage. How different is it nowadays, when, on the receipts of a really successful piece played in England, America, and the Colonies, a dramatic author can " live happily ever afterwards."

CHAPTER XV

IN CHAMBERS—BOURDILLON—A. L. SMITH—
ALFRED WIGAN—MISS HERBERT—*LA DAME
DE ST. TROPEZ*—EMERY—DEWAR—BEL-
MORE—THE OLD ARUNDEL CLUB—SOME
MEMBERS—CLERKENWELL SESSIONS—
LEGAL LIGHTS—MONTAGU WILLIAMS—
KEELEY'S ULTIMATUM—SERJEANT BODKIN
—OLD BAILEY—FOR THE DEFENCE—BESLEY
—LAST APPEARANCES—WORK—POOR PAY
—THOMAS KNOX HOLMES—COMMITTEE
ROOMS—HOPE SCOTT—SAM POPE—RICH-
MOND

SO, for a time, I clung to Lincoln's Inn, read at the conveyancer's, Tom Bourdillon's chambers, with A. L. Smith (afterwards Mr. Justice A. L. Smith) and others, who have, I believe, since become legal luminaries in various lines. Bourdillon was a very old friend of my father's, but took, I believe, full fees for my apprenticeship. My Uncle Arthur and my father were my "sureties" at Lincoln's Inn. In the winter of this year, 1861, Alfred Wigan gave Montagu Williams and myself, a commission to adapt *La Dame de St. Tropez*, which we did, reducing it from, I think, six acts to four. We arranged it with Mr. and Mrs. Wigan at Brighton; and during rehearsal at the St. James's Mrs. Alfred Wigan did all the stage management. It had to be played with

an extravaganza, by William Brough, in which the lovely Miss Herbert appeared as Diana, after having effectively impersonated the suffering wife of Henri Desart (Mr. Alfred Wigan) in our tragic melodrama, which had a long run then and is not yet dead. In this piece played Sam Emery, who was beyond all praise as the villian *Antoine*; young Mr. Dewar, who was afterwards to be *the* one and only *Captain Crosstree* in my *Black Eye'd Susan* burlesque at the Royalty; and George Belmore, a very clever comedian; also a small part, one of the doctors, was played by Mr. Terry, father of the clever Terry family, of whom Ellen Terry is the chief.

The old Arundel Club, as I first knew it, was very Bohemian. I think it was in Essex Street, not Arundel Street, Strand; but am not positive. I remember my first visit. I came introduced by Blanchard, and found upstairs in a very meagrely furnished room some queer-looking men, shabbiness being their chief characteristic, smoking and drinking. They were not dramatic authors, yet somehow they were associated with literature and the drama, but how exactly I have never been able to ascertain. One was a publisher, or related to a publisher; another was a bald-headed solicitor with a theatrical *clientèle* and a harmless mania for giving imitations of birds, beasts, and fishes on the slightest provocation. Strangers being present, he was, occasionally, amusing. I quite forget his name. There was, from the very first day I can remember the Arundel, an ancient, quite typical Hebrew of the Hebrews in appearance, one Jonas Levy, who, I believe, was very kind to "the profession," and who used to make himself very popular by being always ready to put his name down for "Benefits," or to give handsomely to any theatrical charity. Whenever I saw him, then, or afterwards when he lived in Thanet, where he was a magistrate, and owned Kingsgate Castle, he was always smoking a pipe, or, if not smoking it, he was knocking

out the ashes previous to relighting. At this Arundel Club of the time I am describing, shirt sleeves were *de rigueur*, in very hot weather, as the costume suitable for the billiard-room adopted by all, whether they were players or not. I remember another Bohemian club in some Covent Garden hotel where there was no billiard-room, and yet where everyone was in his shirt sleeves. Here spirits and water, pipes and pots, were very much *en evidence*, and the leading members of this club belonged also to the Arundel. The aforesaid comic solicitor, Jonas Levy, and Mr. Tegetmierz, the field naturalist, were among them. But on my first visit to the Arundel there was only one figure that engaged all my attention. I had heard so much of him as an Etoman and as a dramatist; and I knew his work—this tall, handsome, easy-going Frank Talfourd. The most irregular of irregular livers, and the most careless. Not of a strong constitution, he loved Bohemia and was an utter Bohemian. He was brilliant when in the mood; he was clever at his work, and he wrote his classical burlesques with a finish equal to that of Planché, and with a dramatic “go” in them that was beyond Planché’s powers. Talfourd would dine when others breakfasted, and breakfast when other men dined: he was a night-bird, and in the days of the Brouchs, Leicester Buckingham (whose appearance was suggestive of a Ninevite hairdresser on an Egyptian frieze), Byron, Blanchard, John Oxenford, Sterling Coyne, and all the dramatists and journalists of that day, of whom few except John Hollingshead now remain to tell the tale, time was no object, except for those who wrote against it.

Shortly after I met Talfourd here, the club migrated to the corner of Arundel Street, whence it overlooked the Thames. I remember one large room, in three divisions, on the first floor; in the first there was a *table d’hôte* dinner, and afterwards supper; the second was for non-card players, and

the third was for card-players. Smoking was permitted at all times and everywhere.

The fact that I was married and had others besides myself to think about, prevented me from becoming a regular club-bite, which meant, at that time, a person very "irregular" as regards home-coming habits, and spurred me on to work which left me small leisure for amusement. I still had "before me a divided duty." Law, on the one hand, neither very attractive nor primarily productive; the drama, on the other hand, both. The law meant possibilities *in futuro*, considerably *in futuro*; the drama was "cash down." *Necessitas non habet leges*, and when necessities are immediately relieved by the results of congenial work then *Lex* is out of court.

Not that I didn't make essay. I ate dinners; studied, as I have said, at a conveyancer's; studied at my friend "Little Joyce's" (afterwards Joyce, Q.C.); donned wig and gown; tried my luck at the Clerkenwell Sessions, where Mr. Bodkin was chairman. Here I made the acquaintance of Serjeant Sleigh, of Mr. Ribton, of one of the Lewis's (not George the solicitor, but the barrister), of Mr. Besley, afterwards Q.C., brother-in-law of Leigh Murray, who was one of the handsomest and one of the most finished actors of his time. I met also his brothers Gaston and Ned; Gaston's wife, Miss Hughes, a pretty woman, excellent wife, and charming singer, played in many of my pieces. To them I must not forget to add Harry Poland, now Sir Harry Poland, Q.C., who became adviser of the Treasury, Recorder of Dover, and is still "going strong."

Montagu Williams took to the Law like a duckling to water, but then his father-in-law, Robert Keeley, refused to give him assistance if he persisted in dramatic authorship, or if he returned to the stage, but promised every help in his power should he stick to the Bar through thick and thin.

Mr. Keeley was a member of a convivial club which, meeting at the *Café de l'Europe*, called itself "The Kaffirs." To this belonged some solicitors in first-rate practice, and one of them, being a great friend of Robert Keeley's, promised him to do his very best for his son-in-law if he would apprentice himself to a leading barrister, and work. Through him Montagu was started, and having read with and devilled for Mr. Holl (likewise an old friend of the Keeleys), he went on his legal road rejoicing. So our ways parted. I had been to a conveyancer's, as I have said, which was simply a waste of time and money; and though a little reading at Joyce's put me on the right track, yet as my increasing commissions for dramatic work left me small time for studying law, I decided to take a brief or two on occasion, and see what I could make of it.

At that time there were, and there may be now for aught I know, a strange set of underhand attorneys doing a low class business at the sessions. They would be retained for some criminal's defence, would receive their fee from him or his friends, and hand the brief to a simple youth in wig and gown, who would plume himself immensely on being singled out for such a distinction. The case came on. I was one of these thus "briefed" and had to defend somebody or other by cross-examining a witness or two, probably a policeman. Only a few commonplace questions had to be asked, and nervous enough I was about putting them. However, there was some friend at hand to assist, and as the guilt of the prisoner was in nine of such cases out of ten a foregone conclusion, the exhibition of counsel's incompetence was soon over, sentence was pronounced, and the youthful defender of crime looked about in vain for the man who had so confidentially handed him the brief. That man was never seen again. "There was no money in it," and on my asking one of "the old hands," at the Clerkenwell

Sessions, if this sort of thing wasn't rather strange, he replied, "Oh dear no! they're a sharp lot about. Everyone has to pass through the fire." Anyhow, I had been thoroughly "done."

Chairman Bodkin kindly informed my Uncle Theophilus that he would look out for me and see that I was handed "soup." "Soup" meant a guinea from a Court fund which provides that fee for a prosecuting counsel who is then "briefed" by the Court. I think I am right, but I really have forgotten whether the guinea was for prosecution or defence. Whichever it might have been, I got two cases, that is two guineas, and there was precious little to do for the money, but it was better than sitting there in idleness, and having one's toes trod on by Mr. Ribton, who was a kind of Judge Jeffreys sort of a barrister, ready to bully the chairman or the magistrate, and to undertake the most hopeless criminal defences. He, and those of his kidney, made the Clerkenwell Sessions unendurable to most youngsters who were not prepared for this sort of "roughing it," which was more the "roughing it" of a slave-driver than what is understood by that term in literary and dramatic Bohemia.

So I tried the Old Bailey; and the Old Bailey tried me. After attending frequently, a brief was given me before the Recorder, Russell Gurney, to defend a woman who, with her husband, was placed in the dock on a charge of "uttering." She *did* "utter" with a vengeance when I arose (thereto instructed by my friend Besley, who was for the prosecution, and who told me what to say for the defence) and wisely pleaded that my client should be released from durance as being a married woman and therefore acting, according to legal theory, under "coercion of her husband."

"Of course, of course," said Russell Gurney. "Officer," he continued, nodding at the gaoler and not addressing me. At this intimation the gaoler, or whoever the official in charge

was, opened the dock door, pulled the woman's shawl, and said—

“Come out.”

She seemed quite astounded. What! to be separated from her dear husband (such a scoundrelly-looking sort of Bill Sikes as he was!), to be taken away from the partner of her joys and sorrows, from him to whom she had sworn to be true “till death should them part” . . . no, never!—But the turnkey was inexorable; out she must come. “But didn't *he*”—she asked, pointing at me. “Yes, *he* got you off,” replied the turnkey, indicating me. “Come out, we can't wait here all day!”

“Officer!” snapped the Recorder, frowning sternly and motioning him to be quick in removing her.

But before a word could be said or a movement made, she had stooped down, undone her shoe, and sent it flying, with a wonderfully good aim (considering the circumstances), at my head. It hit Besley. Accidental justice, as, after all said and done, the suggestion of her innocence came from him. In another second she had disappeared. No one attempted to stop her. I began to apologise for her rather rough manners, when Besley rose. Whereupon the Recorder nodded to me to sit down and hold my tongue, and my friend, monitor, and opponent, Besley, commenced the case for the prosecution.

My part was over; I had played it, and whether paid for it or not I quite forget. The ingratitude of a client was too much for me, and I bade farewell to the ancient Bailey, determined henceforth to patronise the Courts at Westminster, where criminals ceased from troubling, and where I should find the proceedings more *civil* than those at Clerkenwell or the Old Bailey.

I couldn't go on circuit, as not only had I no money to do it with, but also I should have had to leave my wife and

family of one—and prospects—in London. As for my own relations, well, my nearest relations, except one, as a rule, ignored the fact of my existence, and the “nearer” they were in consanguinity, the “nearer” they were in another sense. I always except my uncle, the “most excellent Theophilus,” who was kindness itself, as far as he understood the matter.

I put in a few fitful appearances at Westminster, where I made the acquaintance of Serjeant Parry, and, after a year or so, had the honour of appearing as junior (in a theatrical case, brought, I think, against the *Glow-worm* newspaper, with which I was connected) to the present Lord Halsbury, then Giffard, Q.C. I was able to explain certain technicalities in theatrical phraseology to him, and so clear did I, in whispers, make my meaning, that he, being quite unable to understand my explanation, put the questions incorrectly, without giving me a chance of setting matters right. My friend and companion, Arthur à Beckett, was called as a witness, and somewhat upset me by asking as he passed me in court “whether he should play the fool or not?” “For Heaven’s sake,” I whispered earnestly, “don’t be an idiot!” and I am bound to say he wasn’t; though the brief scene, between him as witness and me as counsel, was exceptionally amusing to Serjeant Parry, who “led” on the other side. We lost the case; of course Mr. Hardinge Giffard got *his* fees; I didn’t. Why I never recovered them I don’t know. Perhaps they may be even now accumulating at compound interest. I hope so.

This was, with one or two unimportant exceptions, my last appearance for plaintiff or defendant in wig and gown at Westminster. After this, play-writing and rehearsals took up all my time; for every minute of the day and night was occupied.

In those days very small sums were paid for original

pieces, and still smaller for "adaptations." "Runs" rarely exceeded a hundred nights even for the most successful. Boucicault broke the record with his famous *Colleen Bawn*, as did I, afterwards, with my *Black Eye'd Susan* at the Royalty Theatre. But this is "another story," belonging to a later date.

One more legal experience which followed on this—but at what interval I forget.

It was my good fortune to meet Mr. Thomas Knox Holmes. His business was that of Parliamentary Agent, but his pleasure was amateur acting. He was one of the "old Canterbury stagers," and he had been in the Albert Smith pantomime when that dish was set before Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

He was a lithe spare man, with, when I first remember him, "ringlety" hair. He was of rather a Jewish type. He was a first-rate sportsman; hard rider, good boxer, fencer, so forth, and in a general way a "gay dog," of middle age, and a widower. That he should combine the business of a pantaloon, and "general utility" actor, with that of a Parliamentary Agent, struck me as odd; that he should be successful in both, in one as an amateur, in the other as a professional, seemed to me to point out an exceptional line in which perhaps it might be possible for me to succeed. I had been an amateur actor; I had become a professional dramatic author, and I *had* practised at the bar. Pantomime, however, was not my strong point. My "limitations" were burlesque.

At all events I was a barrister, and when Tom Holmes happened one day to observe to me, "I say, young fellow, aren't you a barrister?" and, after I had admitted the soft impeachment, then went on, "Why don't you try the Committee Rooms?" I was puzzled. Honestly I hadn't the smallest idea of what "Committee Rooms" were. "The

Parliamentary Committees," he explained. And he went on to tell me of the enormous fortunes made by Hope Scott and others, who were then practising, and whose names were seldom heard outside these rooms, where they were engaged mainly on railway cases. "Once get in *there*, young man," remarked my worthy mentor, "and your fortune's made."

He said that he, personally, would "do something for me," if I would attend to the business, and almost immediately afterwards he asked—

"Isn't Henry Cameron a relation of yours?"

"Certainly he is," I replied, though at the moment I couldn't exactly fix him in his place on the proper branch of the family tree.

"He's with Pritt & Grubb," quoth Holmes.

"Is he?" I returned, much interested, but without the slightest idea of what sort of people "Pritt & Grubb" were, except that they had comic names.

"Parliamentary Agents," further explained Tom Holmes, perceiving my difficulty. "Now," he continued, "Cameron's *your* man. He'll have a capital position in the firm in time"—he was quite right, I am delighted to say—"and *he* can give you a start *now*; then afterwards—d'ye see?"

I grasped the idea. The next move was to see Henry Cameron, which I did. I arrayed myself in wig and gown, hunted him up in the Committee Rooms, impressed our cousinship upon him (I had not seen him or spoken to him for about ten years), and he (being nobody in particular at that time himself) kindly promised to do whatever he could to assist me if I came regularly into the Committee Rooms.

I attended. The hours were easy. The cases were dull, but occasionally the counsel and the witnesses were very amusing. But what took my fancy after the rough experience of the Old Bailey, was that the proceedings were so pleasant,

so gentlemanly, so easy, so polite. The committee were gentlemen, with apparently not much to do, who had kindly consented to sit in a row like an extended set of Christy Minstrels, only without the instruments, at a table covered with maps, plans, papers, and so forth. It was a sort of drawing-room proceeding. The barristers were in wig and gown, and well do I remember handsome Hope Scott, Q.C., and pleasant Sam Pope, Q.C., of daily increasing rotundity. A very good "all-round man" was Sam Pope. Then there was Holroyd, doing less business, but progressive. Henry Cameron gave me a railway case to look into. I took it away with me; but once at home I had to sit down to some piece I was writing at the moment, some burlesque that required all my attention, as I had to finish it by a certain time in order to receive "a sum on account," which, alas! I could not afford to forego.

So I went into the Committee Rooms with this great railway case. Heard Hope Scott and others; heard Pope; had sandwiches with Henry Cameron; exchanged amusing stories with one or two of the counsel in a small way of business whom I knew, and who all corroborated Tom Holmes' advice as to its being "a first-rate business when once you got your nose in." Henry Cameron and Tom Holmes gave me the straight tip, but my nose wouldn't follow. So that came to an end. I had to work to live; I couldn't live in order to work.

So, regretfully I admit, I bade adieu to the Committee Rooms, to which for some time during the summer I used regularly to come up from Richmond, where we had now taken a house in Marlborough Road, two-thirds up the hill and within a few minutes' walk of the Park. London for business; country for work and recreation; and as closely as possible to this as a sort of motto I have all along been true.

While living at Richmond, I made the acquaintance of

"Tim" Moore, whose name had been to me, many years before, almost as familiar a household word as that of Albert Smith, Shirley Brooks, and their *co-æquales*. He was a journalist by practice, and, I believe, an "accountant" by profession. At all events, he had some mysterious office in buildings close by Waterloo Bridge. He was a most amusing companion *en voyage*, that is, between Putney, where he used to get into the train, and Waterloo Station, where we both got out. Sometimes Rivers Wilson (who, with his sweetly pretty wife, occupied a charming house at Richmond where now stands a big hotel) was of our party, on his way to the Foreign Office, and a very pleasant party we were,—Rivers, Tim Moore, Holroyd (then practising in "The Committee Rooms"), and myself. But Tim Moore was the life and soul of that short run into town.

"I've had a trouble with a stupid sort of carpenter chap," he told us one morning. "You see, my office is a bit out o' the way, and 't isn't everyone in London that mounts up to the second floor to consult Mr. T. Moore the accountant."

"Got a brass plate up, haven't you?" asked Holroyd.

"I've got it up down below," answered Tim; "and another at my door, to catch the eye of anybody who's ascending, you see."

"Well?"

"Well," he resumed, "I didn't have either of 'em there at first. But after a time, when I found business not coming in as it ought, and lots o' people going past my door, as they oughtn't, up and down stairs, I began to consider the matter, and I said 'Tim, my boy, you must advertise! If ye don't blow a trumpet—and that your own—outside the door, who the deuce is to know you're inside waiting for business?'"

So far the court was with him.

"Well," he continued, "I cast about, and, just as I used

to tell Albert,—though Heaven knows *he* didn't want the advice, though Thackeray did, and wouldn't act on it when he got it,—you must 'advertise! advertise! advertise!' in the largest letters possible."

"That advice is all very well for a show," objected Rivers; "but in business"—

"Nonsense, my dear boy! All the world's a fair and every business in it, from fried fish up to Foreign Office, is a 'show' in it. Yours at the F. O. is a big booth, mine's a one-horse affair. Anyway, to keep either of 'em going, you must have the public confidence, and how are ye to get that if the public doesn't know where you're to be found when wanted?"

"True. But about the carpenter," I reminded him.

"I'm coming to that. He came to me, when I sent for him. Says I to him, 'See here now, d'ye know a man who can fix up for me a brass tablet with my name and address on it, and my hours of business, all printed as plain as a pike-staff, put up here at the front door, and another on the landing where everyone will see it?' 'I do sir,' says he. 'I'll undertake to have it done for you in a couple of days.' I just wanted to see that he understood the commission, and so I put him through his facings. 'What'll you put at the top?' I asked him. 'Your name, sir,' says he; 'and on the next line I'll have clearly engraved that your office is on the second floor.' 'Good!' said I. 'But, on second thoughts, just put at the top, first of all, Accountant.' 'I will, sir,' he said. 'That's to tell 'em what your business is.' Just so; and then I told him to state the hours clearly. I'm always there punctually by ten, I told him, and I don't leave till three sharp. This he understood. Would I have both plates the same? he wanted to know. No; on second thoughts it was enough for the one at the door to indicate merely 'Accountant,' then my name and the *étage* where I was

to be found. The plates arrived a week or so ago, brightly polished, printing quite clear, just the sort of thing to attract attention."

"And they did, eh?" we asked.

"Rather!" replied Tim; "but not quite in the way I had anticipated. You must know I always keep my door a bit open so as to catch any passing remarks on the staircase; then, when a customer is in doubt, I can appear and say to him, 'I'm the party you're in search of.' Well, on the first day of my new brass plate I heard several persons going up and down, and everyone of them seemed to be immensely delighted with some joke or another, or mightily pleased with themselves, I couldn't say which it was. *But no one came in.* Devil a word of inquiry was there. Next day, *même jeu*: much laughing, some whispering, considerable shuffling of feet, and on my appearance at the door to see what the fun was all about, away they scuttled,—for it was quite a small crowd,—like rats at the sight of a terrier. 'Now,' said I to myself, 'what the deuce does this mean at all?' Reflecting on the matter, I came to the conclusion that the office-boy had been up to some of his monkey tricks. Sternly I summoned the wretched caitiff to my presence on the landing. Then I asked him, 'Do you know what all these people have been laughing at? You heard them, I suppose?' Oh yes; 'he 'ad 'eard 'em'; and thereupon he began to smile. 'What do ye see to laugh at, you booby?' I asked, for I was beginning to be very angry. 'That!' answers the boy quickly enough, pointing to the brass plate. 'Well,' I returned severely, 'what is there to laugh at there? Read it.' So he read aloud the following distich:—

" 'Mr. Moore,
Second floor,
Office Hours,
Ten till Four.'

Then he grinned all over his face. Everybody had thought I had put this up by way of a joke ! ”

We all laughed heartily, but Moore pretended to take it very seriously.

“ My dear boys,” he protested, “ it was ruin. Who’d come to a comic accountant who advertised himself in this kind of pantomime way ? ”

“ What did you do ? ” we asked.

“ Listen, boys, I’m telling you. I sent for the carpenter. ‘ Look at that ! ’ I said. He did : read it, smiled, and observed quietly, ‘ It is funny ; isn’t it, sir ? ’ ‘ Funny be . . . ! no matter. You must alter it at once. Take it down and bring it back to-morrow. ’ Then he began to remonstrate and to lay the blame on *me* ! ‘ You see, Mr. Moore,’ he said, quite apologetically, ‘ that is your name,—and this is your office “ on the second floor,” and your hours are just what I’ve put, sir. ’ His statement was perfectly correct. There was ‘ no denigin’ of it. ’ So I told him I didn’t care what he did as long as he altered and amended the blessed thing ; and I left him puzzling his head as he produced a screw-driver previous to removing the plate. And how do you think he altered it,” asked Tim, just as the train was “ slowing down ” at Waterloo.

We couldn’t guess.

“ This way,” he continued, answering his own question. “ The plate was up there yesterday, and the man was just fixing it when I arrived. ‘ Done it ? ’ I asked. ‘ I have, sir,’ says he triumphantly. ‘ It won’t be an expensive job to you now, as I have only had to re-engrave one word. There ! ’ said he, pointing to his work as if he were the President of the Royal Academy exhibiting a *chef-d’œuvre* to royalty. Then I read—

“ ‘ ACCOUNTANT’S OFFICE.

Mr Moore,

Second floor ’—

“ ‘That can’t be changed,’ observed the carpenter. And, admitting the fact, I continued—

“ ‘Office Hours,
Ten to *Five*.’

And the ingenious carpenter looked at me and said, knowingly, ‘That’s done it, Mr. Moore.’” And before we had done laughing at his story, Tim had vanished. He knew how to make his point with a good exit.

That is one among the many of Tim Moore’s stories. He spoke with a slight stutter, which added to the effect of his narrative. He had stories about his own stuttering. He would tell inimitably how he was cured of it, and how one morning, on coming across a perfect nest of stutterers in a baker’s shop, the habit came back to him again worse than ever, suddenly, like a fit of ague; and how he once more overcame it, and now rarely stuttered, living unstutteringly ever afterwards. With the exception of Johnnie Deane, Father Healy, P.P., and Lord Rathmore (who, by the way, has just the slightest possible stutter), Tim Moore was quite the most amusing Irishman I ever met. Robert O’Hara, Q.C., was not very far off as a *raconteur* with a rich brogue.

CHAPTER XVI

YOUNG TOM HOOD—SATURDAY NIGHT CONTRIBUTORS—*FUN*—DINNERS—DIFFICULTIES—BRILLIANT IDEA—INTERVIEW—PROPRIETOR'S TEETH—REJECTION—A VISITOR—CRITICISM INVITED—ARGUMENT—READING-VOW—RECONSIDERATION—ODD COINCIDENCE—FIRST MEETING—MARK LEMON—A RIDE—DELIGHT—RETURN HOME—*MOKE-ANNA*—UNEXPECTED SUCCESS—MR. BRADBURY—THACKERAY—ARTISTS COLLABORATING

IT was just at this time that H. J. Byron with others started *Fun*, which was outwardly to look as like *Punch* as legally possible, to be published on a Wednesday, and its price should be a penny, which would suit the thousands of purchasers who might think before they laid out threepence. Some years before this, as I have already mentioned, three pictures of mine had been published in *Punch*; to write for it had never for a moment entered my head. Indeed, apart from my play-writing, I had done no regular literary work, except at various Christmas times, some stories for *Tom Hood's Annual*, occasionally during the year a story or two for magazines, and twice, if I remember right, I had been entrusted with getting together contributors and writing the introduction and finish to a Christmas

Number. I had only written one serious drama, and that had been intended for Robson, who accepted it, read the first act, rehearsed his own part with me privately in his dressing-room, but, alas! died before it was completed. This was subsequently *The Deal Boatman*, which, first played by Belmore at Drury Lane, under F. B. Chatterton's management, has travelled about the country and gone pretty well everywhere since.

I cannot be absolutely certain as to whether "young Tom Hood" or Henry J. Byron was editor of *Fun* when I joined the staff. I am almost sure it was Byron, as I think it was to him I timidly entrusted my first contributions to that paper in manuscript. But of one thing I am sure, that it was Byron who encouraged me, and who intensely appreciated whatever I did at that time. Of Hood in connection with *Fun* I do not call to mind anything; but of him as editor of quite a different sort of weekly, entitled *Saturday Night*, I have a distinct and vivid recollection. He lived within a mile of Sidney Street, Brompton, when I was in my first lodgings in London, and I think his rooms were just out of Brompton Road, in a street the corner of which is now a part of Harrod's stores. At Tom Hood's rooms we were entertained by himself and "Mrs. Tom" with a simple supper, plenty of spirits and water, while every one of us came provided with the necessary pipe and tobacco. Then we—George Rose, Jeff Prowse, Tom Archer, and, I think, W. S. Gilbert, with Tom Robertson and one or two others whom I cannot recall—sat round a table, Tom Hood being chairman; and at the first "symposium" we discussed the subjects on which we were to write, and at the next symposium we read aloud, each his own paper, to the band of brothers listening! Need I say how delighted everybody individually was with everybody else's work? *Cela va sans dire*. To think what a row there would have

been had I denounced George Rose's story as stupid, or had he objected to mine as dreadfully dull, and had we both expressed our utter contempt for Tom Hood's verse or story, or had Prowse sneered at W. S. Gilbert's verse, and had the latter retaliated by denouncing Jeff Prowse's vulgar attempts at humour! There would have been an end of *Saturday Night*! It would have been "Saturday night at sea" with a vengeance! But without this "short way" with it, the weekly paper came to an end very rapidly, and but for these exceptional meetings (I cannot recall being present at more than three of them), I should not have remembered that such a "weekly" as *Saturday Night* had ever existed.

At all events when *Fun* was started and as I came across Byron, W. S. Gilbert, Jeff Prowse, Tom Hood, Tom Archer, George Rose ("Sketchley"), E. L. Blanchard, Clement Scott, William Brough, and others at the Arundel, it occurred to me that perhaps I might join their merry party. With my first work for the paper Byron, some four years my senior in drama and light literature, was eminently pleased, and from that moment I wrote for the paper regularly, becoming much interested in its success. Hearing that *Punch* was carried on by the contributors meeting together at a weekly dinner, the example struck me as a capital one for *Fun* to follow. But unfortunately Mr. M'Lean, the proprietor (a looking-glass seller and manufacturer in Fleet Street), was of a "frugal mind" and did not see himself as "standing the racquet" for the proposed banquets. So we determined to make the dinner a regular Wednesday affair; we would dine at a tavern near Temple Bar, in a private room of course, and the dinner should be served at a moderate cost, at so much ahead, each one paying for his "consommation." We began well and merrily: Byron in the chair. Matt Morgan was one of our artists, sharp and clever as a draughtsman,

who might have gone far had he been properly taken in hand. Brunton was another, and there was yet another whose name escapes my memory; he was a distinct copyist of Leech; clever, but lacking originality. The dinners were cheerful; we were all in high spirits; we didn't sit too late, and we looked in at the Arundel *en route* for home. I say "the dinners," but I quite forget how many of them there were. As each one paid for himself, there was no obligation laid upon him to attend, and so after a few full meetings the attendance became irregular; and when it dwindled to a small party of three, the landlord thought that a room of less size would suit, and that to provide a special dinner, however plain and simple, for a party of eight or ten persons, of whom it was as likely as not that only three would put in an appearance, was neither profitable nor encouraging. So after a few months' trial it was dropped, and the band of brothers was dispersed. Gilbert began his inimitable "Bab Ballads" in *Fun*, and Jeff Prowse's sporting articles, written by an imaginary "tout" or a "Bookie," were admirable. There was excellent light work done in *Fun* in those early days.

At this period I frequently saw *Reynolds' Miscellany*, and much did I admire the dashing pictures by that master of his craft John Gilbert (afterwards Sir John Gilbert, President of the Royal Water Colour Society), which illustrated its current sensational story. I remember how after being from very early boyhood a sincere admirer of *Jack Hinton*, *Charles O'Malley*, and a few others of Charles Lever's most rollicking stories, I had been delighted with Thackeray's inimitable parodies of them, as of the style of other then well-known novelists. Here in *Reynolds' Miscellany* was the very material to work on! Gilbert's dashing illustrations to some story caught my eye in the window of the office where the current number of *Reynolds'* was sold,

and, after supplying myself with sufficient material, I took it home with me to Richmond and at once started upon it. I wrote some pages, and the next day I called on Mr. M'Lean at his looking-glass shop in Fleet Street, over which was the *Fun* office, and laid my plan of campaign before him.

He was standing at his desk "totting up," and received me with a perfect Carker-like smile and the usual "invisible soap" action that is a necessary part of the polite shop-walker's stock in trade. His manner reminded me of Spankie, the then well-known tart purveyor "at the wall" of Eton, when he used to salute a small nobleman, aged eleven, with his most unctuous "And what for you, my little lord, this morning, sir?" So Mr. M'Lean. Except as a suave man of business, I knew very little about him, but up to that moment I had certainly been under the very natural impression that, on the principle of "who drives fat oxen should himself be fat," the proprietor of *Fun* would himself be funny, or, if not funny in himself, at least "the cause of fun" in others by appreciatively paying for the witticisms they produced. In less than ten minutes I was disillusioned. He heard me read the opening part to him. I expected him to smile, then to grin, then to laugh outright, and finally to exclaim—

"By jove *that is* good. There must be a special price for this." Then to the cashier, "Quick, bring the cheque-book!"

But nothing of the kind happened.

He listened and he smiled; but it was the same smile he had had on his inexpressibly irritating countenance before I had commenced to read to him. It never expanded to a grin, although he made a point of showing his teeth, whose whiteness and brightness quite illuminated his imperturbable visage. He never chuckled; he rubbed his hands and

slightly coughed ; that was all. I stopped reading, and paused for some observation ; all that came from him was " Ahem."

Feeling the silence awkward, I explained to him *how* I intended to continue it, how so and so was going to happen, and how it would become more and more convulsively humorous as the story proceeded. Finally, how it would be the very thing for *Fun*, and indeed be the making of that paper. And again I came to a full stop. He had evidently arrived at his own conclusion.

" Ahem !" he commenced, showing his splendid set of teeth, much resembling those to be seen in a second-class dentist's window, and clearing his throat, " I er—quite—er—appreciate your bringing this to me,—ahem—but—it's—in fact—not the sort of thing for *us*,—it won't do."

I was aghast. " Won't do !" I exclaimed.

" No," he repeated, always smiling blandly and drying his hands. " It won't do. It's not the sort of thing."

I wasn't going to argue with a man who I considered to be acting like an idiot, who, dead against his own interests, was chucking away the biggest chance of his life, that is, as proprietor of a comic paper, not as a mirror merchant,—no—reasoning would be wasted on such an individual, and though at first highly indignant, and inclined to throw expressions of scorn and contempt in his obtrusive teeth, yet I parted from him, more in sorrow than in anger, feeling that his treatment of my offer had never been equalled since the Roman king rejected the Sibyl's books (and even he was wiser than M'Lean, as he thought better of it, and saved the last volume from the flames), and that to have, there and then, prophesied the ruin of the house and journalistic property of M'Lean would have been the right thing to do. Yet I only pocketed the MS. with the implied insult, and,

aware that I was cutting myself adrift from *Fun* (which at all events was worth a "something regular" per week, however little), I bade him farewell, as he, always smiling blandly, accompanied me to the front door, opened it and saw me, still vividly conscious of his teeth, safely into Fleet Street. What was to be done? No one was at hand to consult. I could not find H. J. Byron, nor Prowse, nor W. S. Gilbert, nor the wise and experienced E. L. Blanchard. It was before midday, and the Arundel Club was only just recovering itself from its last night's carouse and was beginning to clean up and trim itself for the day. I remembered that my friend Fred. Collins Wilson had accepted our invitation to Richmond, or rather he had proposed and *we* had accepted taking him on his own invitation, as he used to take us at his country place at Theobald's on our own invitation, and that, in my absence, he had probably arrived. So I hurried back; found he had not yet turned up; confided to my wife that M'Lean was what Dogberry wished himself to be written down as, and by luncheon-time our guest appeared. After dinner that night I diffidently proposed to read my *chef-d'œuvre* to my good friend, "whose opinion I valued" (this, of course, is the usual formula when an author commences to be a trifle uncertain as to the merit of his own work), and who "might advise me what course to take," although I did not imagine, at that time, that Fred. Wilson, who was not acquainted with any literary people except the future laureate (then only a minor poet in a very small way), possessed the least influence in the world of light literature. I was therefore a bit surprised when, after he had most cheerfully accepted my offer on condition that I should read aloud while he smoked his meerschaum and sipped his grog, he said—

"Alfred Austin read some things over to me before he published."

"Indeed," I calmly observed, not much interested, as at that time I was only slightly acquainted with the future Laureate's name.

"Yes," continued my philosopher and friend—"Yes, and it was of the greatest use to him, as it enabled him to correct a lot and to polish them up and so forth."

I felt it necessary to explain that what I was going to read to him was not poetry—in fact nothing serious at all, only a sort of burlesque sensational story.

"I don't care about burlesque," he remarked, quietly smoking.

"But you used to play in burlesques and in nothing else at Cambridge," I objected.

"Quite," he replied; "but that's an altogether different thing."

I pointed out to him that Thackeray had done burlesque novels and romances.

"Ah! I daresay," was the reply; "I can't read Thackeray. And," after a meditative pause, "I can't say I care very much for Dickens."

Here was an upheaval!

"However," he continued in a consolatory tone, and more as if he were, between the puffs of his pipe, talking to himself than addressing me. "Of course *you* are neither Thackeray nor Dickens"—I admitted it, and began to cheer up on hearing these names in connection with my own. "Neither Thackeray nor Dickens; and you know how I like the pieces you have already done for the stage"—I was gratified, and began to feel brighter, happier, and, generally, cleverer.

"But," he went on, "of course *this*," and he waved his pipe towards my manuscript, "is not a play, which is quite a different matter."

This depressed me again.

"I'm ready," he said, "if you are."

So with a glass of something handy and a pipe, which having started in full blow was soon allowed to die out, I began to read.

When we retired for the night, that is at about two a.m., I parted company with him, swearing he should never enter my house again, and he, standing at the door with his pipe in one hand and a bed candlestick in the other, vowed that no power on earth should prevent him leaving *the very next morning!*

He was a very late riser. I was not quite so late. I went to my study, and calmly and deliberately thrust the entire manuscript into the fire, watched it until it was reduced to ashes, and *then sat down to begin my work all over again!*

Frankly I owned to myself that M'Lean hadn't been altogether wrong, and that Fred. Wilson had been absolutely right when, the previous night, with the last glass of whisky and water and the last pipe, he had thus expressed his opinion perfectly clearly—

"It *may* be very funny, but it doesn't make *me* laugh."

So we met at lunch all the better friends for our disagreement of the night before, and still better when I owned that on the whole I thought he was right, and that I had burnt it.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, as awfully shocked as if he had been accessory to a crime. "You shouldn't have done *that!* There is so much in it that"—

"That was worth burning," I interrupted; "and so it has gone. I'm going to rewrite it."

I do not remember whether he received this piece of information with pleasure or not. Anyway he encouraged me, and then he said, much to my surprise—

"You know my cousins are the Blacketts."

"Hurst and Blackett, the publishers?" I inquired.

"Exactly," he answered. "And if I can be of use to you with anything in *their* line, you let me know."

I thanked him much.

"And, by the way," he said, "I quite forgot, but it is odd that you should have just now had this break with the *Fun* people, for I suppose it is a break, eh?"

I admitted that it might perhaps be regarded in that light, and asked why he had considered the circumstances "odd just now"?

"Well," he resumed, "Mark Lemon"—I pricked up my ears—"is George Meke's, that's my brother-in-law, tenant down at Crawley. Mister Lemon"—I had never heard him spoken of as "Mister Lemon" before—it seemed so intensely respectful, and made of Mark Lemon, ever associated in my idea with jollification, wit, humour, and *Punch*, such a staid, decorous, and eminently respectable person!—"Mister Lemon, you know, has a cottage—two or three cottages knocked together at Crawley, charmingly pretty—and he and George are on the very best terms. I often meet him there."

Really! Bless me, how little I had known of even my own most intimate friend!

"And," he continued, "when I was down at George's the other day Mr. Lemon asked me all about you."

"About *me*!" I exclaimed, genuinely surprised.

"Yes; he said he had read your *Dido*, and had advised Miss Wyndham to play it"—(good Heavens!)"—"and that

since then he has, so he said, been watching all you've done ; and he thought it likely you might do something for *Punch*."

I was thunderstruck. I seized the moment—the *momentum unde pendet*—and then I did sit down to rewrite what I had destroyed. Most carefully I did it. Never was I so painstaking ; not a line, not a word, but I revised it and polished it over and over again until I *thought it would do*. But not again, no, *never again* have I proposed to read any work of mine to a friend, no matter how friendly ; no, nor invited a friend's opinion on anything I have ever written, literary or dramatic. My experience is that, as a rule, an author is not at his best when attempting to read aloud his own work, and that his amateur audience is either foolishly critical or stupidly indulgent. A professional reading is quite another matter, being one of business. In this case the result was perfectly satisfactory, though at the cost of a temporary rupture of amicable relations.

Then I wrote to Mark Lemon.

The next day I received a letter from him making an appointment at the office in Bouverie Street.

I was unpunctual, and as I was walking along the Strand in the direction of Fleet Street I caught sight of a very big man filling up a hansom, with the doors open, waving one very large hand to me, while with the other he jerked up the trap-door and instructed the driver to pull up to the kerb.

I began to apologise ; " train late," etc.

" I was leaving the office rather earlier than usual," quoth Mark Lemon, smiling genially, as much as to say, " Don't bother your invention about excuses." " And I haven't much time to spare."

Was I to lose this chance ? I could make no suggestion. He caught sight of the MS. in my hand.

" Jump in," he said, " I'm going to the Tavistock, Covent Garden, and we can talk on the way."

I accepted with alacrity. It was not easy to find the necessary space in a cab beside Mark Lemon, but I contrived to squeeze myself in; and he sat as triangularly as a very stout man could who hasn't an angle visible about him. A "thorough all-round man" was Mark Lemon.

"Now," said he at once, "tell me all about it."

I told him I had come up intending to read it to him.

He put that suggestion aside with a wave of the hand.

"Just *tell* me," he said.

I did, as briefly as possible, attempting to explain the essential points, and feeling all the while wretchedly conscious of omitting every single thing that would have ensured its success—in fact, as it struck me at the time, my description of it was simply a bungle, an utter failure!

I felt inclined to stop the cab, beg him a hundred thousand pardons for wasting his time, and then to return home and give up everything generally. What was my surprise when he smiled all over his face, slapped my knee heartily with his broad hand, and exclaimed—

"Bravo!" and then as if struck by a brilliant idea (as it was), he cried in his rich husky voice, and in the most jovial manner, "We'll have it illustrated! I'll get the artists to burlesque themselves! Gilbert will do it! And I'll get Jack Millais! and Hablot K. Brown! It's first rate!! When shall I have the copy?"

"Here it is!"

"Capital! We'll have it set up at once—and" . . . here he became excessively confidential, as beaming with the brilliancy of the notion, he said to me in a confidential tone, "We'll have it set up as a facsimile of the *London Journal* or *Reynolds*!! Mum! not a word to a soul. I've got your

address ; the proofs will be posted. Good-bye for the present ! ” And out I got just at the corner of the Piazza, and it was indeed a joyous and light-hearted man who went down to Richmond as quickly as possible to communicate to his wife the unexpectedly good news, and to tell his friend and adviser.

Mokeanna duly appeared in *Punch*, February 21, 1863. It created a sensation. In the first place, so well had Mark Lemon kept the secret, that the senior partner, Mr. Bradbury, who, having been invalided for some little time, had been unable to attend at the office, on receiving his early copy of *Punch* on the Sunday previous to its date of issue, was utterly horrified, on opening it, to see, as he thought, the first page of the *London Journal* (or of *Reynolds*, for I forget which it was) appearing as the first page of *Punch* ! The error was just possible, as the *London Journal* (or *Reynolds*) was at that time printed by Messrs. Bradbury & Evans. Without more ado, up to town came Mr. Bradbury, that Sunday morning, went to Bouverie Street, and was for stopping the issue, when, in answer to his message, down came “ Pater ” Evans, equally astonished, and then Mark Lemon, from the Tavistock Hotel, who soon explained the joke, though it was some time before Mr. Bradbury could enter into the humour of the proceeding, and, not until the new serial had reached its second number and had made a decided hit, did the senior partner in the firm appreciate what he had considered as a rather risky departure from the beaten track.

My old friend Mr. W. Bodham Donne, congratulating me on my success, recounted how he had asked Thackeray, whom he happened to meet, if this novelty proceeded from his pen ? Thackeray himself, the very Prince of Parodists, in denying this soft impeachment, was good enough to say that “ he wished he had written it.” This was more than

a feather in my cap; it was a plume. Mark Lemon had carried out his original design, and *Mokeanna* was illustrated by Sir John Gilbert, Hablot K. Brown, Charles Keene, Du Maurier, and Millais, in the genuine spirit of burlesque.

CHAPTER XVII

FIRST *PUNCH* DINNER.—MR. BRADBURY—
ANOTHER AT DULWICH—THACKERAY—
INTRODUCTION—MEMORABLE—LEIGH AND
THE CARRIAGE—SOME *PUNCH* DINNERS—
CHAIRMAN—CONTRIBUTORS—THACKERAY
—LEECH—HORACE MAYHEW—SHIRLEY
BROOKS—CHARLES KEENE—DOTLETS—
THACKERAY ON YATES—THUNDER AND
LIGHTNING—STORMS—TEA CUPS—FROM
LABOUR TO REFRESHMENT—SATURDAYS—
THEN AND NOW—PROFESSOR LEIGH—
BRILLIANT CONTRAST—UP FOR GARRICK
—OTHER CLUBS—GARRICK SMOKING-ROOM
—TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT

IT was not long before I was invited to the Wednesday *Punch* dinner. Whether my first introduction to the majority of the staff was at a weekly dinner in Bouverie Street, or on the occasion of an "outing" at Dulwich, I am not certain. I fancy that my first *Punch* dinner was in Bouverie Street, and why I am fairly sure of this fact is because Mr. Bradbury, sen., grandfather of Laurence Bradbury, the present partner in the firm, deferred his departure from the office on purpose to unite with Mr. Evans in welcoming me on my first appearance as "one of Mr. Punch's young men." I remember so well his geniality and his

expression of regret that the state of his health rendered him unable to remain for dinner. But *the* dinner, which if not the first in order, was to me the memorable one, was held at an hotel at Dulwich, not far from the railway station. It was here that I was introduced to Thackeray. At that dinner the entire staff was present. "Pater" Evans was at one end of the table, and Mark Lemon was at the other. Which was chairman and which was "vice" I have not the smallest idea. There was no formality. Mark was jovial, I seldom saw him otherwise; certainly never at a *Punch* dinner. Shirley Brooks was ever on the *qui vive* for a repartee, Horace Mayhew being as a rule his butt. Then there were John Leech, John Tenniel, Henry Silver, Percival Leigh, Charles Keene, Tom Taylor, and Thackeray. I am pretty sure that I sat next to Charles Keene, and he spoke to me of the "story of the herring," which he had illustrated in *Once a Week*. There were no toasts, and there was not on that occasion any discussion of the cartoon of the week, as I fancy the business of the evening had been previously settled by Shirley and Mark together. Anyway Thackeray, as I remember, had to leave early, and after bidding them all good-night with a comprehensive wave of the hand, he paused by my chair, put out his hand, and, as I rose from my seat, shook mine most cordially. Then releasing it, he placed his right hand on my shoulder, and, as it were, introduced me to the assemblage, saying, "Gentlemen, allow the old boy to present to you 'the new boy,' and I wish him every success. He's sure of it." Whereat his short speech was loudly acclaimed, my health was drunk informally, I was not required to respond, and with another hearty shake of the hand, Thackeray quitted the room, turning once to nod encouragingly at me and to wave his adieux to the others.

That was to me a memorable night.

Frequently in my early *Punch* days had we in the summer-time to have our Wednesday dinners out of town. In after years the custom was gradually dropped.

On another occasion I remember Thackeray driving down, to Richmond or Dulwich, in his carriage. After dinner—he stayed late—he asked Percival Leigh (“the old Professor”) if he should give him a lift home; and the Professor accepted. Mark Lemon informed me afterwards that Thackeray had been immensely amused by the Professor on alighting taking out his purse and asking Thackeray how much he was indebted to him, as he insisted on paying his share of the trap! He had no idea, it seems, that Thackeray had made so much money as enabled him to keep his own carriage. Thackeray replied that “he would let him know when the bill came in,” and so the Professor, under the impression that Thackeray hired his carriage for occasional outings, consented to defer his contribution until the livery-stable keeper should send in his account. Charles Keene and the Professor were true, natural Bohemians, and that any literary man, or artist, should possess a carriage, or a liveried servant, or a riding horse, seemed to both of them quite contrary to all the best traditions and unwritten laws of Bohemia. A stout stick, thick boots, overcoat, and wallet, these were all the outfit necessary in Charles Keene’s or Percival Leigh’s opinion for a “brother brush” or brother penman, with an occasional ride on a ’bus.

The weekly *Punch* dinners of the *Punch* cabinet council were held then as now every Wednesday, in the largest room of the office, which was, at that time, lower down Bouverie Street than it is now, just at the second turning going down from Fleet Street on the right-hand side, where there was a dingy-looking little door opening on to a narrow staircase which Mark Lemon, broad-bodied as he was large-

mind, found rather difficult to mount without screwing himself a trifle on one side, and which Professor Leigh and Pony Mayhew, on certain exceptional occasions when the convivial sitting, after business was finished, had been very late and more convivial than usual, found it remarkably difficult to descend without exercising the greatest possible caution. For whereas Mark Lemon, by dint of screwing himself a bit sideways, could ascend and descend with comparative facility, this pair of our "oldest contributors" could have descended with the greatest ease if they had not already thoroughly "screwed themselves" before quitting, with uncertain footsteps, their places at the festive board. "Croppers" were not by any means the rule, but an exceptional one I do remember, when the learned Professor, having mistaken the first step for a continuation of the landing, by a *facilis descensus* was projected on to Mayhew three steps down in advance of him, and both landed on the mat in perfect safety, shook hands, and parted at the door, which was held open for them by one Waller, who was a sort of Trinculo on the establishment, in the service of Bradbury & Evans. Professor and Pony went their different ways, and it was supposed that each arrived in due course at his own "haven of rest where he would be" before the end of the week. At all events they were both safe and sound and at the table on the following Wednesday. At these weekly *concilia*, when everyone was present, with invariably one of the proprietors as representing "the Firm" (in my time it was always "Pater Evans" as "Vice"), Mark Lemon was invariably chairman. Here was the grave, kindly, humorous, and inimitable caricaturist, John Leech, who faced Thackeray at the vice-chairman's end of the table; then Horace Mayhew (known as "Pony"), Henry Silver, Percival Leigh (known as "The Professor"), Tom Taylor (with whose plays I was well acquainted), quick

spoken and fidgety; the brilliant Shirley Brooks faced Percival Leigh, who sat on the chairman's left, while I was placed next to Leigh, with Charles Keene as my left-hand neighbour. To this party were, occasionally, admitted Sir Joseph Paxton, of Crystal Palace renown, and a tall, handsome friend of the Firm's, and of the staff, one Mr. Noaks or Nokes, as well as Sam Lucas and Edward Walford, respectively editor and sub-editor of *Once a Week*, then being published by Bradbury & Evans. These four—Paxton, Noaks, Lucas, and Walford—were the only outsiders I ever remember at the *Punch* dinner. The two first not infrequently dropped in on a Wednesday as long as *Once a Week* lasted; after its collapse, they dropped out. Paxton was a *persona grata* with Messrs. Bradbury & Evans, as was also Noaks [or Nokes], though how they came to be so, I was never informed, or if I was informed I have forgotten. There was yet another who had been admitted to these dinners, a gentleman named Peter Wrackham. I heard about him, but before my time he had ceased to dine at "the table." He may have (by then) ceased to dine at any table. He had existed; but never have I been able to glean the slightest information concerning him. From Sir John Tenniel or from Mr. Henry Silver in reply to my inquiry as to "who *was* Peter Wrackham?" I have been invariably "countered" with a shake of the head, a knowing smile, and, by way of reply, the meditative observation, "Ah! Old Peter Wrackham! Ah!—yes—he was a friend of "the Firm's." Only this and nothing more. So, long ago, I renounced all attempts at elucidating the truth, and now content myself with considering the subject as a kind of sensational heading to a story, *The Mystery of Peter Wrackham*.

These "guests"—as the "supers" used to be described in the programme of a play—did not presume on their privilege, and not one of the four ever took part in the discussions

as to the subject of the next week's cartoon. In fact, I am almost sure that they left almost as soon as the discussion began, Noaks [or Nokes] being the only one I ever remember remaining. Though at this time (1863) Thackeray had ceased to contribute regularly (he did occasionally), yet he was fairly regular in his attendance at the dinner, and took his share in the political discussions, invariably commencing with a sort of apology, describing himself as one not having present authority, but as "one of the past scribes." Tom Taylor was all-impatience, and his arguments were of the sledge-hammer order. Pony Mayhew was comparatively silent except when slyly referred to by Shirley Brooks for his opinion as a professing Red Republican. A handsome man of pronounced Hebrew type was Horace Mayhew, with long white hair and heavy white moustache. He usually wore a mulberry-coloured frock-coat with velvet collar and cuffs, a shirt frill, low waistcoat, diamond pin, fawn-coloured "pants" (as they were termed in Albert Smithian days), and bright varnished boots. He still imitated the "D'Orsay" style, and wore straps to his "pants," which fitted closely over the boot. A silver-knobbed cane, and a hat of which the brim was very broad, much curled up at the sides, and narrow at the crown, completed, with light gloves, his invariable equipment. He was seldom without a cigar, and I never remember to have seen him indulge, as did Mark and others, in the homely "yard of clay." His sobriquet was "The Wicked Marquis," and as a bachelor for the greater part of his life, he was the only one of the party who thoroughly represented "the man about town." Shirley Brooks always used chaffingly to insist that Pony's age was something incalculable; that he was, in all probability, "the Wandering Jew" himself, and that at all events he had been mentioned by Shakespeare in that line in *King Lear*—

“‘Modo’ they call him, or ‘Mahu,’”

Horace held Shirley's sharp-tongued wit in great esteem, and only met his chaff with notes of admiration. Mayhew married quite late in life ; but this was in keeping with his character, as he was always late ; he got up late, breakfasted late, supped late, went to bed late, and married late. But, poor Horace Mayhew, there was one exception to the rule, he died comparatively early.

In those days there was port and sherry after dinner, and, I think, at dinner too ; for I do not recall the presence of champagne as a regular beverage. Coffee after dinner was a very much later introduction ; but I remember that at dessert tea was served during some interval in the debate. By the time Shirley Brooks came to occupy the editorial chair we, having gradually dropped port and sherry, were taking to light claret and champagne ; and coffee came in with the cigars. In Mark's time, spirit-drinking followed on the wine ; nearly all were smokers, mostly of cigars, but " Jackides " (Sir John Tenniel) always showed a partiality for a long clay pipe (" Brosely," I think, they are called), which, when he had " marked it for his own " by drawing his initials on it most artistically, was carefully preserved for him from week to week.

John Leech was always reserved. I remember his thanking me heartily for an article I had written on " street noises and cries " at " a quiet watering-place." He illustrated it, showing a humanised prawn bawling " Fine Pra-a-arns, this marnin' ! " Ordinarily he did not appear interested in politics ; but when he did offer a suggestion, it went direct to the point. Charles Keene was not a great conversationalist, but on the rare occasions when, late in the sitting (I am now speaking of the time after that of Leech and Thackeray), puffing his little black clay pipe, he felt inspired to explain to us the meaning of certain quiet chuckles in which he had been indulging all to himself without any

ostensible incitement thereto, he was simply inimitable; and, as to mirth-provoking, I, with the others, have laughed, cried with laughing indeed, more at one of his labyrinthian anecdotes, the point of which from beginning to end remained an impenetrable mystery to the company, than at the finest and wittiest effort of the most accomplished *raconteur*. Shirley for epigram and witty comments, Mark Lemon for humorous and dramatic narration; but it was not until Mark and Shirley had passed away that Charles Keene burst upon us as an inimitable humorist in the muddle-headed-story-telling line. He smoked what he called "dotlets," which seemed to me to be scrapings of the very strongest tobacco compressed into pipes of the time of Charles II., fished out of the river Thames; or if not the genuine article, a very good, and, of course, as a pipe, a "colourable," imitation of it. Except for volunteering and an occasional look in at the Arts Club (then in Hanover Square), he was a kind of hermit artist, living in a style that suited him, but which I should say could never, by any possibility whatever, have suited anybody else.

Charles Keene used to be supplied by some joke-purveyor with little memorandum books full of coloured sketches (years after my first joining he showed me several of them) roughly illustrating jokes which were to supply him with material. The consequence of this was that, as Keene drew much from his own immediate observation, this collection of jokes became stale, and many of them had been repeated on 'change (the great "joke mart") and in clubs before Charles made selections from the stock, for which, I believe, he regularly paid the purveyor. When I first met Charles Keene in the old days at young Buckstone's and Mat Morgan's studio, with Millais, Prinsep, Leighton, Marks, Stone, "Dolly" Storey, and *toute la boutique artistique* of that period, he was very different from the Charles Keene of the later days.

Perhaps he overtaxed his physical strength, and did not take in enough fuel to keep the engine-fires going.

I must not omit the only night that I ever saw Thackeray lose his temper ; and he did, with a vengeance. The discussion was over—it was in the dining-room in the old office at Bouverie Street—and Thackeray had moved into an ancient arm-chair a little away from the table, but practically between Mark Lemon and myself. Mark was enjoying the after-dinner cigar as he sat back, spread out, as it were, on his large high-backed chair ; Horace Mayhew was in his usual place, as were one or two others. Shirley Brooks had left earlier in the evening. “ Kettle began it ”—that is some irresponsible person (Horace Mayhew probably) dragged in the name of Edmund Yates, and immediately Mark tried (why, I did not then comprehend) to turn the conversation, but to no purpose. Thackeray frowningly asked a question ; somebody replied. Another question, Thackeray becoming hotter. Mark attempted to throw oil on the troubled waters, which would have been effective had they been only waters. But, as it was, he threw the oil on smouldering fire, and—phew !—what a blaze !! Down came Thackeray’s fist like a sledge-hammer on the arm of the chair, as, in quite unmeasured terms, he denounced the man who had written of him in a Sunday paper, describing him as “ a broken-nosed satirist.” Then after this lightning flash and peal of thunder, which made even Mark Lemon quiver, there came a pause. It was the pause after Virgil’s “ *Quos Ego* ”—and Thackeray, without another word, rose quickly, left the room, and the house.

Then Mark told me the story about Edmund Yates, Thackeray, Dickens, and the Garrick Club, and I was sorry for every one mixed up in that affair, especially for Thackeray, who, I rather fancy, was not absolutely satisfied with the line he had taken, although he could not subsequently retract.

Tantæne celestibus iræ! The whole story is to be found, an *ex parte* statement of course, in the autobiography of Edmund Yates, and I daresay in some other "reminiscences." My notion of it, in my Gospel "according to Mark," is that Edmund Yates was wrong to begin with, that Thackeray was wrong to go on with, and that Charles Dickens acted impulsively and rather more hastily than he would otherwise have done, had it been against anyone except Thackeray. To paraphrase Mr. Mantellini's summing up, "None were right and all were wrong, upon my life and soul, O demmit!"

What a difference between the office in those days on a Saturday afternoon and now! *Then* (1864 and for several years) Mark Lemon, Shirley, and "Pater" were "at home," so to speak, to all-comers, after Mark, having "passed the proofs," was ready and willing to pass the bottle, or rather to stop it. Work done, "*nunc est bibendum*" was the rule,—*et fumandum*, for the cigar-box was open to all-comers *ad libitum* and *ad lipitum*. "Corrections" in proofs were then possible up to, and inclusive of, Monday morning. *On a changé tout cela*, and, it may be added, undoubtedly for the better, as nowadays business is "strictly" business; the size of the number is doubled; circulation more than trebled; work quadrupled. We have forsworn sack; those who might take to it again would get it, in another sense, from the austere editor, supported by the inexorable proprietors. Work occupies every department throughout the week, and holidays only intensify it. In fact a radical change.

The mention of these bygone Saturday afternoons recalls to my mind the figure of "the old Professor," Percival Leigh, who having been a medical student with John Leech, had assisted Leech in many difficulties; for did not the artist in early days, when in a somewhat similar situation to Thackeray's Captain Shandon in the Fleet,—only that Leech

did not get farther than temporary retirement in Cursitor Street,—draw sketches which the friendly Professor sold for him in Fleet Street, returning with the cash to the caged bird, who was forthwith released? Why, certainly. And for these good offices John Leech and Percival Leigh, author of *The Comic Latin Grammar*, were ever on the best of terms, since both of them came on to the staff at about the same time. The Professor had many queer fads. He belonged to a generation long past, and with his odd figure, handsome face, but head much too large for his body, would have found an appropriate place in Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle*, or would have fitted in sympathetically with the company at Shandy Hall, and might easily have identified himself with Mr. Shandy when arguing with Dr. Slop. Often and often, in the course of a long political discussion, when the Professor, after raising his voice, and shrilly piping to those who had no ear for his music, would collapse, utterly exhausted by the force of his own arguments, have I been reminded of the old story of the Irish juryman, who, standing out for “Not Guilty” against all the others, testily observed “that of all the pig-headed, obstinate men he'd iver met they were the pig-headedest!” The Professor's arguments, like “the driver's curse,” “unheeded swelled the air”; the decision was arrived at without further reference to his suggestions, and he solaced himself with cigars and mixed drink. The Professor delighted in mysticism and Swedenborgianism; not that he was a mystic or a Swedenborgian, but he loved to admit three parts of any religious, or philosophic, system, for the sake of attacking the fourth part. He would tell you wonderful ghost stories on the very first authority, admit the credibility of them, and then fall foul of the supernatural. To the last he retained his sense of humour, but gradually lost such faculty as he had possessed of expressing it in writing. Long ago his wit had bubbled over and pretty

well exhausted itself in *The Comic Latin Grammar*, a great favourite with the boys at my second school, and one quotation from it at least was popular with my tutor, Gifford Cookesley, at Eton, namely :—

“ When Dido saw Æneas would not come.
She wept in silence and was Di Do Dum.”¹

The Professor in early times was a natty hand at a paragraph, but this faculty deserted him, and he could only write paragraphs in an involved kind of Fielding and Smollett style with the point of his “obserwashuns” secreted somewhere among the verbiage. Unlike Mark, he was totally unable to go with the times. Mark was always, somehow or another, “*dans le mouvement*,” and in this respect ahead even of Shirley Brooks. Shirley was naturally a brilliant idler compelled to work, and when he did take up his pen and, literally, “polish off” an article, he could put more of the very best into one hour’s work, off-hand, than others could do by correcting and working up the article they could never have “knocked off” as Shirley used to do.

Percival Leigh was a herbalist and had curious theories about edible roots, which he would go about collecting in Richmond Park, and, bringing them home to Hammersmith, he would cook them and try experiments with them on his own palate and digestion. He attained to considerable experience in this line, having been a perfect “martyr to the steak,” when experimented upon in connection with all sorts of *fungi* whereof he was the first discoverer. Fortunately knowledge of medicine outweighed his mere acquaintance with these poisonous edibles, and so the risk was minimised. To the very last he loved to dine at midday on a steak cooked, as far as I could make out, in *asafoetida*. It was not

¹ This I find the Professor quoted from Porson, who may have originated the simple jest.

to be wondered at, that, in his wanderings about London with his wallet, purchasing such provender, as had a far-reaching dour, he was, pre-eminently, a lonely man. He reminded me of the traveller who "fell among thieves," for his friends and acquaintances, seeing him afar off, would carefully pass over to the other side. Barring this distinctive eccentricity, he was the dearest, kindest old boy, and a thorough gentleman in the truest and widest sense of that much misapplied distinction.

Once started on *Punch*, it was not long ere I resumed a sort of dramatic form of criticising new pieces which I had some time before commenced in *Fun*. Thence to a serial was a short step. The serial was "How, When, and Where?" into the spirit of which Charles Keene entered *con amore*, doing for it some of his very best humorous work. This was work that, as I learned afterwards, he thoroughly enjoyed. Indeed, his pictures convey that notion. His commendation of a collaborateur and an author was always grudgingly given.

Settling down into a position as something of a dramatist and more of a burlesque writer, much in request for the stage, as by this time (between 1862 and 1865) I had written for most of the principal theatres, having made the fortune of the little Royalty in Soho with *Ixion* produced under the management of Mrs. Charles Selby, which led to my being permanently engaged on that establishment; being also on the staff of *Punch*, it was not surprising that a good-natured uncle of mine, George Bishop (who had married Clara Cowley, my mother's youngest sister), residing at Meadowbank (Twickenham side of the river, very nearly opposite the Duke of Buccleuch's), of whom my wife and I saw a great deal during our residence at Richmond, should have suggested my becoming a member of the Garrick Club, to which he (in no sort of way connected with literature or

art) had belonged for some years. So at his instance I had myself "put up," and in 1865 was elected. I was, subsequently to this, a member of the St. James's, then in St. James's Street, a delightful club, unique in its way, now located in Piccadilly, and of others, including the "Ottoman," a very late and remarkably eccentric club, which, once situated in Waterloo Place, has long since vanished from the map of clubland.

In those early days at the Garrick (1865), with Arthur Sullivan, Frederick Clay, Harry Weldon, Captain Hawley, Smart the novelist, and one or two others, we could, indeed, have adapted the chorus of a once popular song and chanted together—

" We are a merry family,
We are ! We are ! We are ! "

And so we were. Our hearty laughter, as we pretty regularly dined together, brought down upon us the thunder of Sir Charles Taylor, the Jupiter Tonans of the club, in the shape of a severe message, delivered to us by Farman, the steward, a hard, stolid man, considered rather as "a creature" of Sir Charles's, then the head servant of the club. Most of our fellow-members and seniors were inclined to sympathise with us, Sir Charles being looked upon as rather an autocrat, and therefore not generally popular. However, as "Goody" in the opera of *Midas* was requested "to moderate the rancour of her tongue," so we, being peremptorily required to tone down our merriment, complied: we "ate the leek, and eke" we used strong, but not loud, language concerning our tyrannical oppressor. The Garrick, in those days, was certainly old-fogy-ridden, and the glories of its social smoking-room in the old club had become a mere tradition. Other clubs; other manners. The Garrick had begun as a gentlemanly Bohemian club, but in process

of time members of no profession, of the literary profession, of the learned professions, and of the army had rather elbowed out the actors; and thus, other go-as-you-please clubs, mainly for such of "the Profession" as had not yet achieved greatness, and for literary working-men and journalists, came into existence like mushrooms which spring up in the night; and, being principally nocturnally frequented clubs, the simile may be permissible. A new club on these lines occupied the former site of the Garrick, but as card-playing was over-encouraged, and as a considerable proportion of the members thought that in paying an entrance fee and a subscription they had entitled themselves to live free of any charges, the club, like the chameleon, being unable to exist on air, put up its shutters and came to a somewhat untimely, but highly respectable, end.

The smoking-room of the Garrick Club is, and ever will be, especially associated in my mind with the start of my most successful burlesque, namely, *Black Eye'd Susan*, which, after running for nearly two years at the Royalty, successfully, nay, with exceptional success, stood the test of more than one revival, and was played well-nigh everywhere, all over the world, at least wherever there was a company to play it, especially wherever "authors' fees" were not of the essence of the expenses. "Play and pay" in those days was the exception, not the rule.

Now the story of the success of *Black Eye'd Susan* is on this wise.

CHAPTER XVIII

JOHNNIE DEANE—GARRICK—PREFACE TO *BLACK EYED SUSAN*—STORY OF THE GIRL THAT RAN FOR OVER A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS—RETROSPECTING—FORWARDS!

I HAD dined at the Garrick, and was in a position similar to that in which "the last rose of summer" found itself, namely, that "all my blooming companions had faded (away) and gone." The club was empty, for "'twas in the prime of summer time" or towards the end of the season, and opera and theatres, and other London attractions, were doing average business with the *clientèle* remaining in town; but there were no novelties. Thinking I would have a cup of coffee and a cigar before returning home, I betook myself to the smoking-room, of which at that moment Johnnie Deane was the only occupant. He was a round-faced, red-gilled, clean-shaven, twinkling-eyed genial Irishman; sharp, and as full of fun and humour as even Charles Lever could have wished. Like Sam Weller with Mrs. Bardell and Mrs. Cluppins, "we did get a talkin'"; and Johnnie Deane, who was a most entertaining companion, his jolly, clean-shaven, ruddy face giving him more the appearance of a "Rural Dean" than a thorough Londoner, with as rich a brogue as he liked to assume, spun me many a yarn about the glorious times of the "amateur pantomime" in Albert Smith's day, and of the theatricals, in which he had

not only taken a part, but for which he had written a prologue to a burlesque written by Nick Woods and J. C. Parkinson, as given on board the *Great Eastern* when he went out with the party engaged on laying the Atlantic cable. What Johnnie Deane had to do officially with the Atlantic, or the cable, it never entered into my head to question. It was an amusing story, told in first-rate style, and the names of all sorts of celebrities were worked in to perfection. Johnnie Deane had, in me, a first-rate audience. So our talk was about the Atlantic, and sailors, and life aboard ship, and how the nautical drama had ceased to exist since the retirement of T. P. Cook, "the only William," who at that time was still alive.

"Now," said Johnnie Deane, "there's a subject for you, *Black Eyed Susan*."

"*Black Eyed Susan*!" I repeated, hit at once by the idea. "By Jove, first-rate!"

"You could introduce it with what we played," he went on, "with a scene under the sea—just as we did it on board—laying the cable, eh?"

I was doubtful on this point. However, if it were to be a Christmas piece, of course such an "opening" might possibly recommend it. "But," said I, "who'd play it?"

"I'll tell you," he replied. "It could be done at the Surrey. *Black Eyed Susan* was originally a Surrey piece. Shepherd and Creswick are there; and Shepherd is the nearest approach to old 'Tippy' Cook."

"I'll do it," I said with determination.

"Ask him a nightly fee," urged Johnnie, with an eye to business, as a friend and adviser.

"I will," I answered impetuously. "I'll drive there straight away, see him, and be back here to tell you the result."

"I've got some letters to write," said Deane, "and shan't leave the club till you return."

"Good," said I, and, in a hansom, off I went, bubbling over with the idea and foreseeing a real hit at three pounds per night, the only damper on the scheme being that Shepherd had the reputation of being uncommonly "near," and that three shillings was far nearer the fee *he* would offer me than three sovereigns. Still, it would make a hit, and be done all over the country, so I would let Shepherd have the first offer, and would take, well, say, two pounds per night for the piece. So, boiling over with inspiration, I went as swiftly as hansom could take me to the Surrey Theatre, then managed by Messrs. Shepherd and Creswick, and where on that particular night Shepherd himself was playing the part of a sort of "Gipsy Jack" in a regular Surrey melodrama. I had not looked at the evening's bill, but when I was once behind the scenes I knew immediately, by the sentiments expressed on the stage, which occasionally caught my ear, and by the costumes I noticed around me, that the piece then in course of representation could be none other than a thrilling melodrama of the regular "transpontine" (as it was called in those now "far-off" days) character.

Of course, being unknown at the stage-door, I was informed that Mr. Shepherd was playing and could not possibly be interviewed. However, I insisted, and sent in my card with a note, marked "important and immediate." The messenger returned with a request that I would follow him. I did so, and he led me to the "prompt side," and leaving me at the wing, informed me that Mr. Shepherd would be "off" directly, and I was to await his "exit."

There was a considerable noise going on then. I heard Shepherd's peculiarly squeaky voice, giving out what was evidently a first-rate "exit speech," as it was followed by a round of heartiest applause, and just as I was wondering

whether Shepherd would come off at my "wing" or elsewhere, and so avoid me, I felt a tap on my shoulder, and, turning, beheld Shepherd himself disguised as some sort of "cheap jack" or travelling tinker. In his hand he held my card and note.

"You want to see me, eh?" he squeaked. "Haven't had the pleasure of meeting you before. Well, what is it? I'm not on again for another ten minutes."

I lowered my voice in order to impress him with the importance and the serious nature of my communication. I told him, how, remembering the fame of this theatre, as being the one where T. P. Cook first played William in *Black Eyed Susan*, I had come to him, one of its present proprietors, with my original notes for a burlesque on this highly popular play.

"Not in our line," quoth Shepherd, shaking his head. "Our people wouldn't understand it. They like the genuine article. They'd never care for a burlesque on *Black Eyed Susan*."

I pressed it upon him as such a novelty!! He didn't see it. Johnnie Deane had been certain that "Shepherd would jump at it." Jump! he didn't show the faintest sign of making even a step towards it. In fact, if there was to be any jumping at all on *his* part, it was more likely, as it now seemed, to be in the opposite direction. Could I induce him with terms? I tried it. I said he could "have it for three guineas a night."

"What!! he squeaked in so startling a manner that I feared his voice would crack on a top note, "Three guineas a night!! My dear fellow, a West End theatre may be able to pay that sum; *we* can't. Impossible! Ten shillings a night would be the utmost; we couldn't give more, and we should be playing another piece in front of it."

I saw the force of this reasoning, and hoped that we

might adjust terms somehow. But for once my good genius prompted Shepherd to stick to his own terms and to refuse mine, without giving me a chance.

"I'm much obliged," he squeaked as pleasantly as he could, and always compelling himself to be uncommonly polite to a West End author who had come straight from the Garrick Club to seek him—"very much obliged to you for giving me the offer, but, my dear boy"—here the call-boy came up and said, "Mr. Shepherd, sir," whereupon he nodded and said, "All right." From which I deduced his "cue for entry" was to follow within another minute or so—"it's not in our line—couldn't do it. . . I can speak for Creswick and self, and it's of no sort of use to *us*. At Christmas we do a pantomime and the 'legitimate' business. Thanks, good-bye." He called to the messenger, "Show this gentleman the way." Then having repeated to me "Good-bye," he suddenly broke out into an uproarious song and assumed a jaunty manner, from which signs I inferred that "his hour had come" when he had to "strut and fret" on the stage. So just as he made his *entrée* I made my exit. Then back to the Garrick, where I told Johnnie Deane the result of the interview, and then he put the query, "Why not the Royalty?"

The Royalty, of which Patty Oliver, whom I did not know, except by sight on the stage, was manageress, and where I had had such successes, not so long ago, under the Mrs. Selby management, with my *Ixion* and other extravaganzas!

Who better for Black Eye'd Susan than pretty, sprightly, dark-eye'd Patty Oliver, or "Miss M. Oliver," as her name appeared in the bills? Shepherd's terms wouldn't do for me; perhaps Patty Oliver might be more amenable. As to this matter of "authors' fees," I must explain that, in those times, the rule was to give "so much down" for any

piece ; the price for a work by a popular author being one hundred pounds an act ; and an original burlesque was rated, on the books of the Dramatic Authors' Society, as a piece in so many scenes equal to an act of a drama ; while a farce, which was generally "taken from the French," never commanded more than twenty to thirty pounds, though for a brand new, an original farce *not* taken from the French, a generous manager might possibly have given fifty pounds ; but I doubt it. For "B. B.,"¹ as I have already said, no such sum was received, and that owed nothing whatever to a foreign original. Prices for seats were then much lower than now ; receipts were less, but then so also were rents, rates, and taxes. Anyway, authors were shamefully underpaid ; and that they were so was their own fault. Boucicault's appearance with *The Colleen Bawn*, and his demand to be given a fair share of the takings, otherwise he would withdraw the piece and go with it himself, playing Myles-na-Coppaleen, elsewhere, settled the matter with Ben Webster at the Adelphi, and introduced the system of "percentages" and "sharing terms," of which authors were not too quick to avail themselves. It had never occurred to me that a burlesque could be worth a drama *in point of receipts* ; and Dion Boucicault's advice was a revelation to me. Would it had been given me very much earlier in my dramatic authorship career ! However, better late than never ; and remembering of what advantage Dion Boucicault's experience was to me, I have never let an opportunity slip of recommending to commencing authors, whether youthful or not, the simple and perfectly fair "percentage system," that is, the "percentage on the gross takings nightly," as the best and most just way of taking remuneration for their work. "A lump sum down" will ever be a temptation to the impecunious, and lucky the author who, on the

¹ *The Benicia Boy*. See *supra*, pp. 242-4.

first rung of the ladder, is *not* impecunious. I fancy they are less impecunious than they used to be thirty or forty years ago, and far less Bohemian. This may be only fancy, engendered by not knowing very much, just now, about absolute beginners.

However, I adopted Boucicault's advice. I had determined to propose my idea for a burlesque to Patty Oliver, who had recently taken the Royalty Theatre, where the tide of success had not as yet set in.

The owner of the Royalty Theatre was, at that time, one Thomas Mowbray, a theatrical "business man," agent, and, I believe, a money-lender in a small way to such professionals as might be out of an engagement. Tom Mowbray, "the Devonshire Squire," as we used to call him, on account of his never losing any opportunity of informing his friends and acquaintances how "Devonshire is my county," had been an actor and many other things, I daresay, besides; he was well up in old stage traditions, and was on more or less good terms with all the elder generation of actors in my earlier days. Macready he had known, and had appeared on the boards with him; Charles Kean he had known; Fechter he had had business with; Phelps was a friend of his; and, indeed, there were at that time very few persons in any way connected with "the profession" who did not take care to be on the very best terms with "Tom Mowbray."

Now in making my business arrangement, or in "coming to Hecuba," as Mowbray invariably phrased it, with Miss Oliver, I felt myself in somewhat of a difficulty. Our arrangement (I had Dion Boucicault's advice at my fingers' ends, and carried it out "down to dots," appearing as quite a remarkable man of business) was that I should share (not take a percentage, for D. B.'s scheme gave me the alternative of "share *or* percentage") the receipts of the house nightly, after deducting expenses, in which, of course, was included

so much, per day, for T. Mowbray's rent as landlord. So T. Mowbray, as it struck me, being an interested party, would be just the very person to serve as middle-man between Miss Oliver, on the one part, and myself, on the other. Need I say that the Devonshire squire "tumbled" to this with alacrity, of course taking five per cent. on my takings for his trouble. Whether he took another five from Patty Oliver was no affair of mine. What in cash did the old Royalty hold? Well, the stalls were five shillings, the circle from the back of that was three, the gallery was a shilling; and when there was between sixty and seventy pounds in the house it was choke full, and when there was over seventy, well, *then* there were extra chairs put in wherever they could be placed. Now, what were the expenses? The rent of that theatre at that time was certainly not more than three hundred a year at the outside, and I am not at all sure if I am not overstating the amount by a hundred and fifty pounds. I knew that in Mrs. Selby's time it *was* a hundred and fifty pounds per annum, and it had jumped up to that from a state of haphazardous tenancy, when the rent might be calculated upon at a doubtful eighty pounds a year. Ask what the rent is now!! I saw it jump, to my own knowledge, up to a thousand pounds per annum, but this was some little time after the Devonshire squire had parted company with it and had retired. Say the rent could be put down at under a sovereign a night, then the expenses, all told, of the theatre would amount to under twenty pounds nightly! Yes, the little Royalty, in the old days, was worked at less than eighteen pounds per night; and, had the management been as clever as was that of Mrs. Bancroft (Marie Wilton) and her husband Sidney Bancroft at the little theatre across Oxford Street, within a few minutes' walk of the Royalty, Patty Oliver would have made a small fortune before her early death.

The Devonshire squire fixed it up so that I should share after twenty-three pounds nightly; and on those terms I continued to work with Patty Oliver for some time. Artful squire! The charming actress besides her salary pocketed the first seven pounds, as at a much later date Tom Mowbray explained to me, but of course, as *he*, disinterestedly, put it, "the matter was pretty well 'fixed up' between Patty Oliver and myself before *he* was called in."

So the terms were ultimately settled for the burlesque, and Patty Oliver was much taken with the notion of playing the part of *Black Eye'd Susan* before ever a line was written.

Johnnie Deane of the Garrick Club sent me the rough MS. of the submarine burlesque they had played on board ship, and, out of compliment to him, I adopted the notion as a sort of pantomime introduction to the story. It served its purpose, as it was a submarine scene, with gauzes and "lights down," and no "principals" appeared in it. Thus it led up to the real scene, the first, the coast of Deal, bright and lively with nautical music of the most hornpipey description, capitally arranged for a very small orchestra by an indefatigable leader named Hermann, who, when not occupied in the orchestra, retired to a cupboard under the stage about three feet by five, where he copied, composed, wrote music for publishers, and took light refreshment, occasionally interviewing visitors, who could only literally "look in on him" when the cupboard-door was open.

Full of Boucicaultian ideas as to pounds, shillings, and pence, and "business matters," I had not placed this burlesque on the Dramatic Authors' List at first, and when it achieved success I was not going to let country managers have it for the pitiful fees that had hitherto been considered

fair dues" for this class of piece. This move in a new rection "fluttered the dove-cot" of the Dramatic Authors' society in King Street, Covent Garden, of which Sterling Doyle had been secretary, but who in 1856, I think, had been succeeded by Palgrave Simpson, a more or less retired dramatic author, a kindly man and everybody's friend, generally spoken of as "Old Pal." He was not a bad melodramatic actor as an amateur, and was one of the lights, the heavies, of the Canterbury "Old Stagers," whose performances still continue, with new scenery, younger actors, new dresses and appointments, and a renovated theatre. I am forestalling matters as to the Dramatic Authors' society. But the result of my keeping *Black Eye'd Susan* off the books of the Society was that all the provincial managers met and decided that they would leave me and my pieces further first ere they would play one of them. But they said, "If Mr. Burnand wishes us to play his piece on special terms we will make them with him, provided he comes himself and plays in his own urlesque."

When *Black Eye'd Susan* had passed her hundredth night (or more) and was well in for another hundred at least, I took the leading managers at their word, got up a company, made my bargains, and played at most of the leading theatres for some months, until I found (as at another time I did, with "readings") that it must be one thing or the other—either go on the boards as actor and author, or stay off and be content with being author and writer. If this hadn't been my decision, of course I should have had to retire from the staff of *Punch*, as to attend "in my place" at the Cabinet Council dinners every Wednesday, and yet be performing at the same time in the provinces, would have been a *tour de force* only to be accomplished by the historic bird of Sir Boyle Roche that "could not be in more than

two places at once." However, I will return to the stage, that is, I will go back again to the point whence I started, the inception of *Black Eye'd Susan*, and proceeding duly to the completion of it as a five-scene burlesque, the reading, the rehearsing of it, and its production.

In those primitively simple days, the prehistoric days of the drama, when an audience could at reasonable prices appreciate the humour and pathos of a two-act "domestic drama," the broad fun, contemporary "hits and allusions," the comic singing and the sprightly comic dancing in a burlesque, and then end up the evening with a roar of uncontrollable merriment at the broad situations of the "laughable farce to finish with," the theatrical caterers for the public had not so difficult a task as they have nowadays, in this "so-called twentieth century," when the cultivated persons who would direct the public taste turn up their noses at farce, wonder how anyone could ever possibly have been amused by any burlesque that was ever played, and yet crowd to hear and see "musical plays," which, being mere shreds and patches stitched together by several professional "hands," with a thin thread of story that cannot be dignified by the name of dramatic plot, running through them, are rightly described as "variety shows," or "musical pieces." The popularity of such pieces, as long as they can be amended at the will and pleasure of a deft manager, who can have quartettes and songs "let in," and other songs taken out, and new dances substituted for old ones that have lost their "go," will continue until this sort of "variety" shall have lost its charm, and they will then give place to genuine comic opera written by a single author and its music by one composer. *En attendant*, where is the composer?

We were all fairly sanguine about *Black Eye'd Susan*, though no one expected the great surprise that was in

tore for us on the first night, when, after a trio parodying the very favourite old air, *In the Gipsy Life*, by Balfe, sung by Mr. Howard as *Dograss*, Patty Oliver as *Susan*, and Mr. Danvers as *The Dame*, Charles Wyndham (now Sir Charles) and Miss Ada Taylor came bounding on as *Hatchett*, "a deal Smuggler," and *Raker*, "an Ideal Smuggler," and then the quintette of "Pretty Seeusan" was inimitably sung by them, all dancing the while, and never for an instant quiet any one of them, except for the second, when all had to listen to Patty Oliver's nightingale trill, which, leading from the verse to the refrain, literally brought down the house in thunders of applause. Then the dancing and chorus were resumed, the steps became more and more varied, the movement faster and faster, until Danvers, as Dame Hatley, after bounding about like an irresponsible Indian rubber rag doll, or a puppet in a fantoccini show, and after responding to some half a dozen encores, which roused the quintette to fresh exertions, sank exhausted; whereupon Patty Oliver, gasping and smiling, and looking prettier than ever, curtsied in acknowledgment of the compliment paid to her and her companions, but resolutely declined to "take any further steps in the matter." By this scene the success of the burlesque, which was hardly in doubt for one minute after the first appearance of Mr. Fred. Dewar as *Captain Crosstree* being rowed to shore in a little boat by Miss Rosina Ranoe as *William*,—we had several "sweet Williams" after she left us to fulfil another engagement, but none with such a go and spirit or who looked the dapper little sailor to the life, that is, to the life required by burlesque, as she did,—was assured, and the scene between the slightly elevated Captain and the coquettish Susan kept the fun going fast and furious up to the culminating point of the court-martial consisting of several admirals of all sorts of colours who, while singing altogether "He's a

jolly bad fellow" as the "verdict of them all" on the unfortunate tar, are suddenly interrupted by the revivification of the supposed victim. It was a roughly and very readily written burlesque, with jingling rhymes of indifferent merit; but it was dramatic, and it was acted with such energetic earnestness by all the principals as I have rarely seen equalled in the representations of this class of piece. Dame Hatley's marvellous terpsichorean gymnastics were immortalised by Sir John Tenniel in a delightfully humorous sketch commemorative of the unexpected pleasure he had taken in witnessing these "feats of legs." Charles Wyndham was a wonderful dancer, and however nonsensical might have been what he had to do, he was thoroughly in earnest when doing it. For nearly two years this burlesque held the boards at the Royalty, exceeding by many hundred nights the run of my previous burlesque *Ixion* at the same theatre under the management of Mrs. Selby. I followed with other burlesques and other pieces, of which only one—partly in prose dialogue, which was a new departure—achieved more than ordinary success. Subsequently Miss Oliver retired from management, and falling ill not very long after quitting the boards, the stage lost one of the prettiest and merriest actresses of light comedy and burlesque. I fancy Patty Oliver was not much over forty at the time of her decease, and she must have gone on the stage very young, as my first recollection of her dates as far back as my Eton days, when I saw her for the first time, and remember her well—a handsome, dark-eyed girl with the prettiest voice possible, playing the *ingénues* at the Lyceum, then under the management of Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris. She appeared (how well I recollect it!) as the youthful daughter, with nothing much either to do or say, of *Affable Hawk*, the leading part, inimitably played by Charles Mathews, in

the *Game of Speculation* (a translation of *Monsieur Mercadet*), with Robert Roxby, Frank Matthews (no relation to Charles) as *Earthworm*, and a funny little comedian of the name of Souter. Happy nights those, when, after the comedy (with Matthews in it), the laughable farce (with Matthews in it), and the extravaganza, with Madame Vestris (and yet again Charles Matthews in it), with young Jack Reeve, Julia St. George, and James Bland, all singing and acting capitally to our great contentment, as boys of fifteen, we (my Cousin Bransby was always the other boy on these occasions) were taken by my father and his friend (generally "Jimmy Rouse," already mentioned), to an oyster shop, I think the name was Knight's,—anyway it wasn't Rule's in Maiden Lane,—in the Strand, where we were regaled with oysters, stout, and bread and butter, brought to us by a plump "cheery cheek'd maid," as "Artaxominous, yclept the great," styled his Distaffina. Jimmy, after the fashion of the young men about town of that day, invariably addressed her as "Mary, my dear," and drank her health in the pewter, one eye wickedly winking at her the while, which compliments Mary, as ready to return chaff as was any one to give it, usually received with a "go along with you," or with that perfect equanimity that never deserted her when she totted up the items of the repast without figuring them out on paper, and presented the bill "out of her own head," to the well-satisfied customers. How we boys envied our elders their cigars after supper! How we admired "Jimmy," who could be so easy and affable with the blooming waitress! Happy times! The shop, I see, is still there, but, somehow, it has lost its homely appearance, by having apparently entered into some sort of rivalry with the modern flaring, glaring, upper-ten restaurations "*où on soupe*," but not in the jolly old Bohemian fashion of "long, long ago," when the "best natives"

were only about a shilling a dozen, and all the world was young and had an excellent digestion !

However, the foregoing is only a "cast back" *à propos* of Patty Oliver as *Pretty Seeusan*, who, fortunately for all concerned, "did not say no" to the burlesque when it was offered to her.

CHAPTER XIX

MARK LEMON IN RETIREMENT—GEORGE SALA
AND SHIRLEY BROOKS—PROFESSOR—TOM
TAYLOR — LEECH — THACKERAY — DU
MAURIER — SAMBOURNE — TENNIEL — OUR
RIDES — OUTINGS — THE “T.P.C.” — *A NOS*
MOUTONS — *SUSAN* RUNNING — NOTE ON
TRILBY—*EXPERIENTIA DOCET* — RETRO-
SPECTIVE — PROSPECTIVE — BUNN — BACON’S
—ARTHUR BACON—OLD SHIP—BRIGHTON—
NYE CHART

IN the meantime my work for *Punch* was going on steadily and prosperously. Of my fellow-workers on the staff, apart from companionship at the table, I knew comparatively little, with the exception of Mark Lemon, on whom I used to call at his rooms in town, or at the Tavistock Hotel. Both at his house at Crawley, and when he was staying at some out-of-the-way cosy inn in Sussex, my wife and I, when ever we were at Brighton, used to visit Mark Lemon, enjoying his cheery companionship and his excellent stories. With the exception of Shirley and Mrs. Brooks, at whose house in Regent Park we used frequently to dine or sup, and who, later on, used to drive down to spend the Sunday with us at Hale Lodge, when we lived out of town, I did not “know” any of my collaborateurs “at home,” as the Eton boy used to put it, for there was all the difference between being a

fellow-schoolfellow of a "chap" and "knowing him at home"; the former being knowledge acquired in a formal capacity, the latter involving intimacy. Horace Mayhew, "the wicked marquis," I knew next best, as him I was wont to come across whenever I had "a night out," or whenever I happened to dine at some eccentric club, the members of which sat late and retired early. These men were of the second or third literary class, who might be included under the heading of "supper-numeraries," depicted by Tom Robertson at his "Owl's Roost," a convivial fraternity, living from hand (with a glass of spirits and water in it) to mouth, doing odd journalistic jobs, knowing something about everybody; a kindly lot, of little profit to themselves, but of marketable value to newspaper editors. Horace Mayhew, when in funds, would assist several of these impecunious gentry, as would that king of Bohemians, George Augustus Sala, the most brilliant, the most quaint, the wittiest, the kindest, and the most quarrelsome of them all. Warm-hearted, soft-hearted, as honest a man as ever breathed, he was so exquisitely "tetchy" that I doubt whether there was a single one of his very best and most intimate friends who, at some time or another, had not had a desperate quarrel with him about nothing. He and Shirley Brooks were bosom and boon companions until George Augustus took offence at something Shirley had written, and then they went at it like Knights of the Press, in an affray, with their burnished and sharpened steel pens in rest. Who cared for either? A few journalists; still fewer artists, and two or three personal friends, members of second-rate literary clubs. Was the public interested in, or even amused by, this slinging of ink? Not a bit of it; for it was not concerning a matter of any sort of public importance, or of any literary value, that they were at loggerheads; it was purely personal. Their attacks on one another

in print were absolutely unintelligible to the general public.

Of Percival Leigh, "the Professor," I knew little more at the time of his death than I did when I first sat next to him at the *Punch* table. Tom Taylor, as a member of the Dramatic Authors' Society and of the Garrick, I used frequently to meet, but only once was I at his house at Lavender Hill. So I may say of Leech, on whom in his house at Kensington I called once, not many months before he died, when he showed me a number of pencil memoranda, in pocket-books, for future "cuts" in *Punch*. Of Thackeray I knew more, in the very short time I had for seeing him in his own home, and at the *Punch* table, than I did of any of the others, except Mark and Shirley. With the advent to "the table" of Du Maurier and Sambourne, filling the places felt vacant by Leech and Thackeray, began a new era of, at that time, "new men" on *Punch*, who, with the slight advantage to me of being their senior on the staff by a few months, were in effect "co-æquales." Charles Keene I once visited at his studio in Chelsea, only once; two or three times at his house in Kensington. John Tenniel I used frequently to meet quite away from *Punch* business, as he was always a devoted equestrian, and this, as the only form of exercise possessing any charm for me, brought us together. Any number of delightful rides have we enjoyed together, one of the many and one of the best and longest having been a couple of days in Epping Forest, when Linley Sambourne, Tenniel, and myself put up our horses at the Forest Inn, Chingford, dined happily, slept well, rose early, and rode all day, arriving in London about eight in the evening. A most delightful "outing."

While on this equestrian subject, I may as well mention the "T.P.C.," although properly its place in these reminiscences is very much later, the date of its origin being Sunday,

May 25, 1890, as entered in the club's diary by our indefatigable secretary, Charles Willie Mathews. The commencement of the club was on this wise. Frank Lockwood, Q.C., Linley Sambourne, Willie Mathews, and myself used to ride out pretty regularly every Sunday morning; we took our gallop in Richmond Park, and returned to our respective homes in time for lunch. Sometimes John Tenniel would accompany us; and frequently Charles Russell (then Sir Charles, Q.C. and M.P., that is, before he rose to the Chief Justiceship) would add himself to our number, quitting us at the Robin Hood Gate of Richmond Park in order to pursue his way, sometimes alone, sometimes with one of his sons, Arthur or Charles, to Tadworth Court, Epsom, his country house. During the week, while taking an early jog in Rotten Row, we would be arranging for our next Sunday's ride, and then Sir Edward Lawson, in those days an indefatigable horseman, would ask if he might join what sounded to him likely to be a very pleasant party. So it grew, until every Sunday, in spring and summer, we could fairly count upon a party of five out-of-town riders.

One Sunday at the Greyhound, at Hampton Court I think, while we were lunching, I suggested that as a few commercial men working together invariably formed themselves into a company, so we might turn ourselves into a club.

"There are rowing clubs," quoth Lockwood.

"Why not riding clubs?" propounded Willie Mathews.

"The Chief" (Sir Charles Russell was always "the Chief") gravely considered the proposal, argued it *pro* and *con*, and finally put it to the vote of the meeting, when the motion "that such a club be started" was carried unanimously.

We proceeded at once to the election of members and officers. Sir Charles was to be the president, and to be henceforth spoken of and addressed as "President," or,

as Sir Frank translated it into his best French, "Mossoo le Presidong." I was elected "Vice-President," a purely honorary distinction, involving no responsibility of any kind, and Willie Mathews accepted the secretaryship. It was further proposed that "notices should be printed and sent to the members, advertising the meet for the next Sunday or any other day; that these notices should be on post-cards, and," it was gravely added by Frank Lockwood, that "all expenses, necessitated by the printing, addressing, signing, and posting such cards, should be borne by the honorary secretary."

This was carried *nem. con.* amid much laughter, in which the hon. sec. heartily joined.

I fancy our party was Sir Charles Russell, Frank Lockwood, Sir Edward Lawson, John Tenniel, Linley Sambourne, Willie Mathews, Harry Furniss, and myself.

The name of the club was my suggestion. "We," I put it, "were primarily roadsters, starting invariably from London, and bound to the roads until we reached commons like Wimbledon and Putney and the green sward of Richmond. Now the only two distinguished equestrians associated not only with hard riding, but distinctly with hard-road-riding, were honest Johnnie Gilpin and dishonest Dick Turpin. *Ergo*. Let us call ourselves 'The Two Pins Club.'" And this was carried by acclamation.

When we found that we should for reasons limit our number exclusively to nine members, an amendment was proposed whereby the "Two Pins Club" would be altered to the "Nine Pins Club," which amendment, as appealing to the ear and not to sound common sense, and being of the nature of a legal quibble, abhorrent alike to our President, to Lockwood, and to Mathews, was negatived without a dissentient voice.

So the number of our members was nine and the name

of the club was the "T.P.C." Notices advertising the meetings of the "T.P.C.," short "pars," from Edward Lawson's pen, describing the gatherings, appeared, mysteriously, in the *Daily Telegraph* and in one or two other papers. In clubs they began to ask what it meant. Mr. John Hare, who had recently taken to riding, was added to our list, and Frank Russell, one of our president's sons, completed it.

We had delightful rides. Lord Rosebery invited the club to lunch at the Durdans, and afterwards confided his opinion to a friend that "this club had only one horse and one story between all the members." The foundation for this witticism having been that out of the nine who lunched, only four had ridden over from Tadworth; and on this occasion there was one excellent story, the special property of the club, which eclipsed all the others. It was a merry midday meal, and everyone was in the best of spirits, especially our host. In fact the club received a number of invitations, but as the horses had to be invited as well, it was not every invitation that could be accepted. The president was hospitality itself; at his "open house" at Tadworth we were entertained splendidly. The invitation on a second occasion, when Lady Russell was at home, was extended to the "spindle-side" of the T.P.C.

Sir Edward Lawson, too, gave us a magnificent reception at Hall Barn, when some "trained" their horses down; but I, considering "training" unworthy of a T.P.C. man, stuck to the saddle, and rode from town, staying the next day at Hall Barn, and back to town the day after. I had a companion in Sambourne on my return. Edward Lawson rode part of the way, then returned to his house. Pleasant times to remember.

All this hospitality and conviviality spread the fame of the club to such an extent that applications for admittance to membership came in from all quarters. It was a big

success; but to increase it was to ruin it. Members were now to be admitted because of their social distinction, and the qualification of possessing a horse, or of being able to ride, ceased to be absolutely essential; and if this was no longer to be the *sine quâ non* condition of membership in a riding club, what on earth was the use of keeping up its distinctively equestrian character?

There was a dinner given by ourselves to ourselves, at the Garrick Club, to which we could each ask a friend, in order to propose and elect him as a member of the T.P.C.

We drank the president's health most cordially; that and I think the secretary's health were the only formal toasts, but somehow or another there ensued a lot of speechifying, nothing formal but everything very amusing. As to elections—why, we elected everybody present! Mr. Pinero, who rarely rode, Sir George Lewis, who never rode, and Sir Arthur Sullivan, of whose few performances on horseback I had, in the earlier days of our acquaintance, been an amused but somewhat nervous eye-witness (his knowledge of riding being just a trifle superior to Mr. Winkle's), were all elected; also, I think, some others who not only had never ridden, but who never for a moment had entertained the slightest intention of riding.

As a matter of fact with that dinner, and with those additions to our number the club began to totter. Then, instead of a joyous party of five or seven meeting, only "three horsemen might be seen," as the ancient novelist, G. P. R. James, used to write, "wending their way towards the trysting-place." And the tryst became *triste*. Then two met, and deplored the falling off. It was a painful reflection that, in an "equestrian club" so many members, once well mounted, *had all fallen off!* "O what a falling off was there!" Afterwards, there was a temporary re-mounting; but when our dear Chief became the Chief indeed,

Lord Chief Justice of England, then we felt that, if he led us out at all, it ought to be with some state worthy of his dignity. Frank Lockwood was Sir Frank, Q.C., M.P., and we had Sir Edward Lawson, Bart., but Lord Chief Justice of England—no, this was “too high for the likes” of the T.P.C. as a body. Fancy Johnnie Gilpin and Dick Turpin, specially the latter, hobnobbing with the Chief Justice!

No; 'twas not as an “equestrian club” ought to be, “on-all-fours”; and so farewell to the T.P.C. for ever, and “if for ever, fare thee well!” we said nothing; we did nothing.

“Oh no, we never mentioned it,
It's name was never heard,”

as the old song has it, and so it passed into the list of clubs that had been, leaving but a name, and many happy memories, behind. At the end of the session of 1892 the “T.P.C.” ceased to exist. And I am glad it happened so. The melancholy note to be sounded in every club is when the old friend and companion does not answer to his name on the roll-call. Not so very long after the club had thus silently extinguished itself, we were all of us mourning the decease of two distinguished men, one Charles Russell, who had become Lord Russell of Killowen, kindest-hearted man and staunchest friend, and the other, his constant companion, in business as in pleasure, Sir Frank Lockwood, one of the very best, the most unaffected, as he was one of the wittiest and most genial of all the companions I have ever known and loved.

This is a digression from what ought to be the regular course of Reminiscences; but it is better, I feel sure, to follow the impulse of the moment, and to tell the tale that seems to come in opportunely, than to wait for the exact place and date where, chronologically, it should appear, as if I were measuring these random reminiscences by the

rule of thumb. After this digression, which is not so much a wandering away as a leap in advance, I will attempt a process which was easily carried out by Hop o' my Thumb when he cleverly found his way out of the wood by means of pebbles, or nuts, which he had previously dropped on the road, and which served him as landmarks. In the present case neither pebbles nor nuts, but a few dates, will assist me.

While *Black Eye'd Susan*, which had been produced on my birthday, November 29, 1866, was continuing her triumphant career at the Royalty, I had plenty to do for other theatres, with regular work for *Punch*, to which I gave at least a couple of days a week. And *à propos* of this regular work, although as a young and ready writer I went to it with a will, and it cost me no effort, yet, when called upon, as I occasionally am, to give advice to anyone with the dangerous facility for regular light journalistic work and for dramatic writing, I am bound to say : Stick to one line of business only^r; choose drama, *or* light literature, if these two come easily to your hand, but, as by dramatic work you can nowadays make ten times the amount that you can ever hope to realise by journalism light or heavy, or even by novel-writing, unless you have some exceptional success when your dramatic version of your own novel will bring in treble the sum you will receive from your publishers, my advice is, *stick to the drama*. You may fail three times out of four perhaps ; but let one play catch the public, and straightway you will become a comparatively rich man. George du Maurier used pen and pencil for *Trilby*. It was excellent writing, reminiscent of his model Thackeray, but with variations in a style that was peculiarly his own ; and the success of *Trilby* as a novel, praised as it was by critics, was not equal to its merits, that is, in England. It 'caught on' in America ; it went like wildfire ; someone,

struck by a 'happy thought,' dramatised it, and the drama, in the profits of which Du Maurier only shared, brought in, and went on bringing in, more than the author, in his wildest dreams of avarice, could possibly have imagined. Fortunately for him, the publishers had generously handed over to him the dramatic rights, with which Du Maurier had parted for some small sum, like fifty pounds down (as not likely to be of any value!), and fortunately also, by the improved law of "copyright and dramatic rights" affecting England and America, Du Maurier's consent to the dramatisation was essential, and thus he became a partner in the dramatic property created by *Trilby* as a play. But in my time, alas! the recognition of "authors' rights and copyrights," at home and abroad, as well as the system of agencies and percentages, was only just commencing. Boucicault had begun it, and, but for his genius for speculation, would have done wonderfully well both as actor and author. I was a bit too late in the field, and my duties being divided, I gradually found myself bestowing far more time on my "*Punch*-work" than upon plays. So it followed that instead of settling down to steadily thinking out and constructing a drama or a comedy, I took to adapting from the French, which was to me a very easy matter, since managers paid well for work done; but, of course, as there are other interests involved, those of the English adapter are not permanent.

The money began to come in with *Black Eye'd Susan* as with dramatic work that followed it, but the large amounts that dramatic authors make nowadays would have seemed impossible, and indeed were so, to such dramatists as Tom Taylor, Oxenford, Watts, Phillips, Bayle Bernard, the Brouchs, Frank Talfourd, H. J. Byron, W. S. Gilbert (before he and Arthur Sullivan had "struck ile" at the Opera Comique and then at the Savoy), Reece, Halliday, and other "minor

bards," and going back to an earlier date, before my time, to Sheridan Knowles, Bulwer Lytton, Douglas Jerrold, and their contemporaries. Old Maddox in Albert Smith's day used to pay five pounds to a hack translator for turning a French farce into English, and the French author had no rights whatever. Following Boucicault's lead, Byron, I think, increased his terms, but his *Our Boys*, which ought to have, and which would have made him a millionaire in these days, never realised for the author anything like the sum made by the London managers, Messrs. James and Thorne. As fees, I remember Tom Robertson, who had for years vowed, with Savage-Club earnestness, that "when his turn should come he *would* make the managers pay," received, as he once told me, ten pounds per night at the Haymarket when he wrote for Sothorn, and so also, I fancy, did W. S. Gilbert, whose *Palace of Truth* had taken the town by storm. Of course, subsequently, the fortunes made by D'Oyly Carte, Gilbert, and Sullivan with their "Savoy Operas" was an exception without, so far as I am aware, a precedent. That composer and librettist did not start at the Opera Comique on the same footing that they continued when they came to the new house, the Savoy Theatre. This I happen to know, as with Alfred Cellier I was asked to write an opera, which I undertook to do, provided we both received exactly the same terms as had been paid to Gilbert and Sullivan for the *Sorcerer* and *Pinafore*. Those terms amounted to no more, indeed a little less, than what Gilbert alone had received from Buckstone at the Haymarket for his *Palace of Truth*, and less than Tom Robertson had told me he was asking Sothorn. Nowadays a dramatic author makes a thousand pounds where some fifty years ago he would not have made a tenth of that sum; and for an operatic librettist the payment was ridiculously small, though it must be admitted that his work was generally

rather slovenly, as may be seen from any cursory glance over the *libretti* of such popular operas as Wallace's *Maritana*, Balfe's *Bohemian Girl*, *The Bondman*, and indeed all the results of the successful Balfe-and-Bunn ("The Poet Bunn," as *Punch* used to call him) collaboration.

So with means and family increasing, and everything going along prosperously, I could take my work as I took my pleasure, easily, and the two went together, for I could always work out of doors, riding or walking, and an idea "when found" was immediately "made a note of."

About this time, as I have said, I used to run down occasionally to Brighton to stay with friends or to put up for a few days in lodgings, and now and then to treat ourselves, my wife and self, to a hotel, generally Bacon's, whose landlord, Arthur Bacon, was always "an old buck of the first water," with a hearty old-fashioned welcome to all his visitors, an immaculate white waistcoat, a brilliant flower in his button-hole, and such shining boots as illumined his paths on the darkest night. He spoke in a high falsetto, and laughed with a comical little nervous squeak. He was an excellent host, insisted on waiting at table himself to see that everything was properly served, that the waiters did their duty, and also to artfully recommend the most expensive wine at the most expansive moment. This geniality told in the bill, whose proportions, when the departing guest, or rather the "parting" guest, saw it on his last morning, made his hair stand on end like the fretful porcupine's quills. As Traddles observed on similar occasions, "it was a pull." And there was Arthur shining and smiling and rubbing his hands and "hoping to see you again soon" and offering you a glass of anything you liked to take (which you didn't, for fear of reopening the account) before you went off by coach, or train, as the case might be.

Arthur Bacon knew "everybody who was anybody,"

everywhere and anywhere. His and his brother's hotel, the Old Ship, was for years the *rendezvous* of theatrical, musical, and sporting celebrities. Here, if we didn't take up our temporary abode, we were at least quite at home whenever we chose to drop in and dine, that is, when we could afford "to do ourselves particularly well." It was in the winter; I was taking a holiday and amusing myself with the Brighton harriers, while my wife and our little family (I think we had got as far as three then out of the future seven), with some friends, found plenty to do during the day. At night either I worked, or we looked in at the theatre, of which the proprietor, Mr. Nye Chart, was an excellent specimen of the old-fashioned country manager, who had a stock company, capital performances, and, at Christmas, a pantomime that regularly drew all Brighton for six weeks without relying to any great extent upon "stars."

Now this visit was my last long stay in Brighton for mere amusement, as in later years I only went down there on the occasion of our A.D.C. performances, with which during the cricket weeks, in imitation of the Old Stagers at Canterbury, the members of the *Quid Nunc* Cricket Club, Cambridge, combined with those of the A.D.C. to entertain the residents and visitors at Brighton.

CHAPTER XX

SOTHERN — THE SUPERNATURAL — AT THEOBALDS — A DISTURBED NIGHT — THE HAUNTED ROOM — THE STORY — BY DAYLIGHT — ITS MORAL — MY HOST'S VIEW — MORE SPIRITS — A PARTY — THE MEDIUM — HOME, SWEET HOME — EVENING WITH HOME — SNUFF — *SÉANCE* — CONSEQUENCES — *CHEZ* LORD DUNRAVEN — A STRANGE STORY — NO SOLUTION

THIS chapter is to be devoted to my experiences of spiritualism. That eccentric comedian Edward Sothorn used to pretend a deeply serious interest in spirit-rapping; and that he and a friend of *his* in the City, a professed practical joker, were on the best of terms with some of the "leading spirits" professing at that period the "black art," led me to suspect humbug, not quite harmless, in the entire business. Unless a "professor" be actually caught red-handed in using physical force to produce raps, knocks, and mysterious communications, it is difficult to pronounce positively on the presence of trickery; nor in all cases was there any deception, for it seems to me an undeniable proposition that certain individuals may be gifted with some strange supersensitiveness, just as one species of plant is "sensitive" and one species

of eel "electric." And why should not such special instances be paralleled among human beings? That, primarily, such "signs and wonders" as may be performed by these specially gifted persons ought to be mistrusted we may assert on the plain warrant of Scripture, which bids us to "try the spirits," and therefore the most severe tests, when it is necessary to enter into such matters at all, should be applied. Neither Sothern nor Johnnie Toole ever viewed the manifestations from any other point save that of the practical joker. In some instances Sothern found this a dangerous matter, and in America the result might have been serious to one of the victims whom his practical joking, having gone too far, had very nearly rendered distraught. It was stopped in time. My friend Fred, Wilson of Theobalds, whom I have had occasion to mention more than once before in these pages, was very much interested in anything and everything that savoured of the supernatural. I was always under the impression that rats were the cause of most of the weird noises at Theobalds, where the owner heard sounds that did not reach the ears of ordinary mortals—"for which relief much thanks"—and saw, or thought he saw, ghostly forms, armless spectres, absolutely purposeless, without a word to say for themselves! Well do I remember one night, when sleeping in what was specially known as "the haunted room," how I was awoke by a curious sighing noise, and as it seemed a mysterious scratching or tapping at the window. We had been sitting up late "talking ghosts," and though I had had a good, dreamless sleep from about midnight till two a.m., yet when suddenly awakened by this sound, all the horrors we had been discussing seemed to reproduce themselves in a strange, wild, Walpurgis night whirl in my half-dormant brain. The persistence of the scratching and of the sad sighing, like the plaint of the "poor soul" singing "willow, willow," soon thoroughly roused

me, and I confess I did not feel at all comfortable. My state was one of wakeful apprehension. The blind was down; the shutters were not quite closed; and the room was in darkness, except that a ray of moonlight filtered through the blind. The small fire which had just sufficed me, while undressing, had gone out, and the temperature outside the bedclothes might be invigorating, but was certainly not inviting to one snugly "tucked up in his little cot" as I was.

However, as long as this scratching and sighing (as of a ghost that had climbed up the creeper and was disappointed at finding there was "no admission") continued, the sounds, like Macbeth's memory of his evil deed, had "murdered sleep," and therefore in vain did "the occupier" invite the approach of "nature's soft nurse," whom this spirit-scratching had "frighted" from his eyelids.

To get out of bed, to venture into the unknown as it were, or, to put it plainly, to go to the window and try to find out what on earth (or elsewhere) was the matter, presented itself as the very last course to be adopted. Oddly enough the persistence of the weird noise was neither regular nor monotonous. It stopped occasionally, sometimes for seconds, then resumed operations in sharp scratching manner; sometimes for a minute, and then tapped with a dull sound. At last desperation, represented by perspiration, seized me, and, with one bound, I was on the floor. "If it were done, 'twere well it were done quickly," and following the excellent example of Hamlet in calling the good supernatural powers to his aid against the evil, I made, boldly but shivering, for the window. Scratch, scratch, scratch. Hold! If it should be a rat!! Impossible, no rat ever born would climb up a wall and sit on a narrow window-sill scratching at the glass. A bird? If so, what lunatic bird could it be?

A "woodpecker tapping," having in the darkness mistaken this window for "the hollow beech tree"? Impossible! An owl? No, that bird would be too wise, for he is only "stupid as an owl" when in the daylight. A bat? I sincerely trusted that, whatever it was, it might not be a bat, which is to me a detestably fiendish creature, to whose company that of a fairly respectable ghost would be infinitely preferable. But in any case, be it what it might, I hoped that if only I made enough noise at the window the thing, whatever it was, would scramble off, jump down, or fly away, according to "the nature of the beast,"—and depart.

Nervously therefore I rattled the half-closed shutter. The sound ceased. More nervously I, with great caution, folded the shutters back. A chill, cold air seemed to encircle my loins, and again came the mysterious scratching and the sighing more distinctly than ever! Heavens! what was to be the next act in this tragic drama? Should I be alive in the morning to tell the tale? Of course the idea of a burglar was preposterous; no one ever yet heard of a broken-hearted burglar on the top of a ladder sighing because he could not effect an entry with his "jemmy," and scratching for admission, like a locked-out pet dog. No burglar. One other supposition, as the sorrowful sighing and timid scratching were resumed. Might it not be the result of the struggles of some animal, a rat or a squirrel, whose tail had been shut into the window? And I remembered that squirrels not only scratch but bite viciously. So do bats, and their bites are poisonous; at least it occurred to me that I had read this, probably in some natural history written by Mr. Barlow for Sandford and Merton.

It might be any one of these horrors of the night; but, on the whole, I inclined to the ghost, remembering that this was *the* haunted room, and therefore, so to speak, had a certain reputation to keep up.

The blind moved.

I dashed forward, pulled the string, up went the blind with a rattle and a snap, and I stood stock-still prepared for the worst!

Nothing. Thank Heaven, no pale vampire-like face peering in through the window panes. I was well up in the tricks and the manners of vampires. No vampire here. Clouds passing over the moon and the tops of trees swaying to and fro in the wind. Then the moon shone and fell full on the leaves of the tree close to the window. . . .

Horror! The hasp of the window was unlocked!! Whatever was still trying to get in had certainly effected this, and in another second the lower frame would be lifted and The Thing (ugh!), whatever it was, "The Dweller on the Threshold," would leap on me!

I shrunk back. Then, changing my mind, I dashed forward and made for the window-fastening. That I would close at all hazards. The sash would not yield to pressure—the bolt had sunk a good quarter of an inch from its usual position! Oh the terror of that awful moment!

The lower part of the frame was struggling upwards. The scratching and the sighing were more persistent than ever. Then I saw . . . Something that had penetrated under the frame forcing its way in between the sash and the ledge!! . . .

It was the thin end of a branch of a tree.

The window had been left open; this overgrown branch must have been swept in suddenly by a strong gust just at the moment when the servant was closing the window for the night; and she, not giving herself the trouble to clear it out and fasten the hasp, left the branch where it was, partially closed the shutters, and contentedly departed.

Need I say that to shove the branch outside, to shut the window, fasten the hasp, pull down the blind, and close the shutter, to nip into bed and tuck myself up, was the

work and the pleasure of a moment, and that another few seconds saw the haunted man as fast asleep as ever he was in his life, and so remaining "in the arms o' Porpus" until the breakfast gong had sounded twice and the mechanical cuckoo had rushed out of his private office "over the clock" and in a throaty way had announced a quarter-past and had then jerked himself back, closed the door with a snap, and retired in disgust after wasting his notes on a sleepy world that was deaf to his warnings. About an hour or so later, as timed by the irrepressible cuckoo, whose ardour no slighting could repress, we had assembled at breakfast. Then I told my ghost story.

Breakfast time is not favourable to serious story-telling. There was no sympathy. A lady present said we oughtn't to have stopped up so late.

When our host appeared at his later breakfast, I repeated the tale to him; with a purpose; that is, I wished to show him how absurd it was to call that the haunted room and to attribute any mysterious sound to supernatural agency.

He listened, coughed, nodded, shrugged his shoulders, drank his tea, and simply said—

"Yes. You're quite sure you didn't dream it all?"

Of course I was sure.

Then he observed, "The window could not have come open of itself, and *all the windows at night are always carefully closed.*"

As he was a most particular man, and as my explanation involved the charge of remissness against a housemaid, I held my tongue, and he added this story to his collection of all the other incontrovertible legends concerning the haunted room which he was wont to recount to his guests, and in future I was referred to for the corroboration of the facts as he stated them. Curious position; but if a visitor, who is fond of visiting, cannot stretch a point in favour of his

most hospitable host's eccentricities, then he had better scratch his name off the lists of such of his friends as are possessed of country houses and indulge in peculiar "fads."

It was not to be wondered at that Fred. Wilson, being so fond of the weird and mysterious and of attempting to take "peeps behind the veil," should contrive to make the acquaintance of Mr. Home, the then celebrated spiritualistic "medium." To ask him to Theobalds, where there was a house full of guests (it was in June or July I think), was the next thing, and fortunately my wife and myself were also invited to be of the party. We were down there for some time; but Home being full of engagements could only spend a couple of days at Theobalds.

We were all much interested in the "Seer," about whom everybody was talking, for at that time "spiritualism" was literally "in the air."

We were a mixed company of I daresay about ten persons, ranging in age from Mrs. Austin (mother of the present Laureate), a dear old lady, quite deaf, to two young ladies, our host's cousins. A Chancery barrister, a youthful composer, Mr. Walter Austin (a brother of the present Laureate), then commencing his successful musical career, a country squire and his wife, the cousins aforesaid, a very shrewd though stolid man with a remarkably handsome and very lively wife, and my wife and self with our host and Mr. Home, made up the party.

Croquet was the order of the afternoon, refreshments in the garden, lounging, chatting, reading; then dinner, comparatively early, for our host at all times of the year stuck to his 6.30 dinner ("so," as he said, "to give us plenty of time in the evening"), and after a short stay in the drawing-room the entire party used to make a move to the smoking-room, for in those benighted days we did not commence our tobacco immediately after dinner, but stayed

for some time drinking port or claret and exchanging opinions, for what they were worth, on things in general. The snuff-box, a very handsome one still in my possession, was handed round, and in those days we were all "friends at a pinch." Nothing consolidates a party after dinner like a pinch of snuff. I am informed that snuff-taking is (in 1902) coming into fashion again, but the evidence for the fact is scanty. All depends *how* snuff is taken as to whether it is a cleanly fashion or very much the contrary. However, we were all at Theobalds "snuffers" *pro tem.* first and smokers afterwards.

On this occasion, however, our host had induced Home to give us a *séance* in the library, and so the visits to the upper regions, where the spirits (and aerated water) awaited us, was temporarily postponed. For what reason I could never ascertain, Mr. Home at first positively refused to hold any *séance* if I were present. I indignantly protested. I earnestly assured both him and my host that to treat so serious a matter lightly (specially if it were a dark *séance*) was utterly foreign to my nature, and that if Mr. Home would kindly consent to my being present I would be, as Sam Weller puts it, "dumb as a drum with a hole in it."

On the strict condition of my remaining mute and not interfering in any way, although Home foresaw probable failure in consequence of my "antagonistic influence," I was allowed to take my place as one of the solemn conclave seated around the mysterious oval table. The room was dimly lighted, and it was not at first "a dark *séance*." I watched the proceedings very closely, and just when everybody was becoming rather weary of doing, seeing, and saying nothing, there were distinctly heard several raps, not given as a postman would at the front door, nor as would an auctioneer with his hammer, but sounding like the tick, tick of a tape machine or the clicking caused by the sending

or receiving of a message at a telegraphic station. It rather reminded me of the mysterious scratching at my window already recounted. To locate it seemed to me to be difficult. It stopped; it was resumed, and then suddenly Home announced that some spiritual body invisible to all except the operator wished to make a communication to Mrs. Austin, who was deaf, as I have already mentioned. Walter, her son, was present, and he asked what name the spirit gave? Home, interpreting the raps, made out a female name, I forget what it was, but this is, here at all events, an unimportant detail. The name, however, was the right one, and the inquirer requested that the message for his mother might not be delivered to her, but to himself. This was conceded. Whereupon the raps being interpreted and read out just as a telegraph clerk might take down a message, were explained to mean "God bless you, happy at last," or some such sentence, which, as will at once have been seen, was capable of more than one interpretation, according, as Immortal Sam puts it, "to the taste and fancy of the speller."

"I won't trouble my mother with it," said our friend, explaining to us, "because she is just now very anxious about a relation, Mrs. —," and here he mentioned her married name, "who, as we have heard only this afternoon, is in a very critical state."

He told us subsequently in the smoking-room that his (I think) cousin's seizure had been sudden, was indeed a relapse when she was on the high road to recovery, otherwise his mother and himself could not have accepted the present invitation.

There were other raps, other messages, of no consequence, and nothing happening, we all became slightly weary of it, and so Home, who, probably, had been bored by the futility of the *séance* far earlier than any of us, pronounced

the sitting ended—*causa finita est*—and we all, that is, the males of the party, more or less impressed, trooped up to the smoking-room to take our last cigar, or pipe, and more spirits (with water), before "turning in."

For a time we naturally enough discussed spiritualism, but as Home showed no inclination to indulge our curiosity or enlighten our ignorance, the conversation merged into all sorts of general topics. Before we retired I had made friends with Home, and got on with him so well that he accepted my offer of a seat in my trap, as having driven over from Hale Lodge, Edgware, where I then resided, I was driving up to town early on business, intending to return to Theobalds in time for dinner. This arrangement suited him to a nicety, as he could not prolong his stay; and it would suit me too, as I foresaw the chance of a quiet chat with the accepted Representative of Spiritualism.

The next morning, as most of the guests were leaving during the day, we all put in an appearance at a not very early breakfast. Our host not being down—his health did not permit him to be even a moderately early riser—the honours were done by Mrs. Austin, who sat at the head of the table and undertook the distribution of the tea and coffee. It was about the hour of second post; we were all expecting letters and papers; and in a general way inclined for conversation, which is a rare state of things at breakfast time early or late. In the midst of our pleasantries and personalities the second post arrived, and the contents of the bag were brought in by the servant, who in this bachelor establishment served as major domo, groom of the chambers, confidential valet, butler, and footman. Never was such a useful manservant as Young. To our host a "Factotum" absolutely invaluable. So Young, who was on the best of terms with everybody, distributed the letters, with an appropriate

remark to each individual, for he was one of those old-fashioned servants who availed himself of his master's permission to join in the conversation that took place at luncheon, breakfast, or dinner, and was therefore invariably referred to as an authority not to be lightly contradicted. This morning, however, his remarks were limited, and were not intended to be humorous, as the appearance of the letter he delivered last had depressed him: it was for our dear old lady at the head of the table; it was edged with deep black, and was marked, as far as I can remember, "special delivery." We had all noticed it. Directly Mrs. Austin had given one glance at it, she rose hurriedly, and, without a word, quitted the room. Her son followed her. It was a painful shock to us all. We regarded one another curiously. Home said nothing, but gave the closest attention to the "from-hand-to-mouth" business of breakfasting, in which we all were engaged.

"Some bad news," was a wise opinion expressed in sympathetic tone.

"Evidently," softly murmured the younger cousin of our host, who had appointed herself, temporarily, to the office of tea-and-coffee maker.

I looked at Home. He was not to be drawn.

Then a lady at table nervously ventured upon a reference to our *séance* of the previous night.

"Ah, yes," said Home, in an absent-minded manner.

The lady recalled the facts, commenting on them as being "strange."

"Not in the least," said Home quietly. "To me, if the news conveyed in that letter has anything to do with the spirit-message delivered last night, the incident is a matter within my ordinary experience."

At this moment Walter Austin returned.

"My mother is very much upset, and begs you will

excuse her," he said, addressing himself to the cousin who was his mother's *remplaçante* at the breakfast-table.

Of course we were all genuinely grieved and earnestly sympathetic, Home included. " Might we inquire ? "

" Yes, certainly," he answered, and then, as the young lady had done a few minutes before, he too recalled the message given at the *séance* on the previous evening. The letter had come by special delivery, and announced his relative's death, which had taken place yesterday evening.

This event broke up the party " in most admired disorder," and Home being as anxious to return to town as I was to have the chance of a quiet chat with him, I ordered my trap, had his portmanteau placed in it, and away we went. We chatted on all sorts of subjects by the way, and at length touched on Theobalds, the company, and the *séance*.

" That was a very happy hit of yours," I observed.

" What was a happy hit ? " he inquired, most innocently.

" Why, the message of the spirit to Mrs. Austin," I answered.

" It was no ' happy hit,' " he returned, evidently rather annoyed, but with an air of imperturbable gravity ; " it was a fact. I do not profess to exercise any control over the spirits."

" But," I argued, " putting spirits out of the present question, though I admit that as to the rapping and so forth there is much which seems to me very difficult to explain, except on the hypothesis of spirits of somewhat questionable character "—

" *That*, of course, may be so," interposed Home.

" Allowing that," I went on, " wouldn't it be quite possible to arrive at such knowledge as would show an apparently intimate acquaintance with facts supposed to be known to only one person, without the intervention of spirits ? "

"I don't quite understand," said Home guardedly.

"Thus," I continued, "a stranger arrives, he mixes with all the house-party, and with his ears and eyes open he finds out in a very short time and quite accidentally that two persons out of the number are specially interested in the health of an absent relative; that they have their qualms of conscience as to whether they ought to have left home at all, and determine to return as soon as possible, hoping, however, that, *en attendant*, no news is good news, and so forth.

"Well?" inquired Home guilelessly.

"Well," I pursued, "would it not be comparatively easy for anyone professing to tell fortunes by cards or by palmistry, to have communicated to that lady, some hours after, late in the evening, after the last post had been delivered and no news had arrived by it, and when the delivery of a telegram was as a hundred to one chance, very much the same sort of vague message, like 'I am happy,' which was conveyed by your invisible, but not inaudible, spirits? Does 'I am happy' mean 'I am dead and in heaven,' or 'I am recovering,' or 'I am well'?"

"How on earth should I know?" protested Home. "I only profess to be a medium of communication, and I can no more give you the true interpretation of any message from the spirit world than the electric wire can inform you as to the real meaning of any 'code' word, or for the matter of that of any message whatever that is sent along it."

Of course, I agreed. It was evident that we were on dangerous ground. He preferred avoiding the question, "Do you accuse *me* of being a humbug and cheating?" and I should have been puzzled to answer him directly. I did not accuse him, as I was ready to admit that such spiritual interventions, as he professed to obtain, were possible, but that in this particular instance, as in many other similar ones,

the said intervention of spirits was "not proven," indeed, was decidedly doubtful. Whether Home's "spirits" were "above" or "below proof," I have never as yet been able to decide.

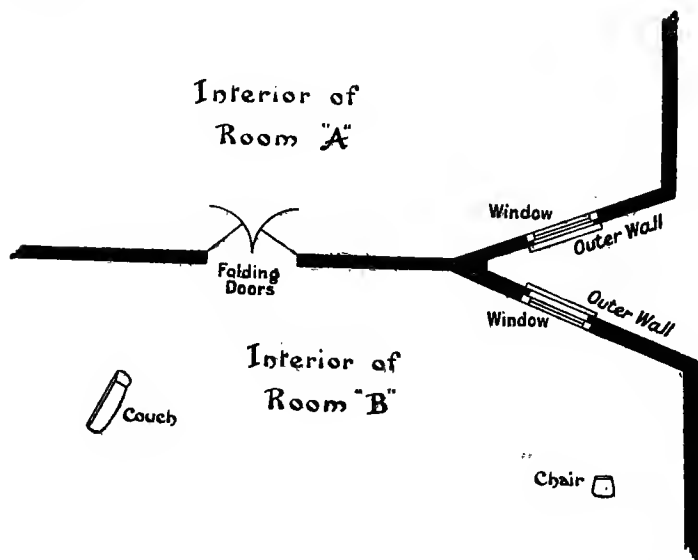
We parted good friends, mutually understanding one another, and I do not remember our ever having met again.

Lord Dunraven's story as to Home floating in the air, which I think appeared in some magazine, but of which his Lordship kindly furnished me with an account written out in his own hand (I have it by me now among my "archives"), may be by this time forgotten. In a few words I can, and I think I ought to, recall it, as it certainly tends to clear Home's character and to make us wonder what sort of weird creature he was. Before and since the time of Simon Magus, to float in the air is, as I gather from certain occult works on "signs and wonders," one of the recognised manifestations of supernatural agency. We have the evidence of Holy Writ in confirmation of the phenomenon. It is, as we know, as dangerous as is "playing with fire," since, though the magician may "go up like a rocket," yet, the spirits being notoriously untrustworthy, he *may* "come down like a stick."

Lord Dunraven, then Lord Adair, had, I believe, rather "taken up" Mr. Home, who had been raised to the rank of a Lion of the Season, and had gone in for spiritualism, just as, being of an inquiring turn of mind, his Lordship in his time has tried his hand at many, if not at most, things.

It was in Lord Dunraven's rooms, not on the occasion of a formal professional *séance* as I understand the account, but of a casual visit paid by Home, who found Lord Dunraven at home chatting with a friend. There were two rooms which communicated with each other by folding-doors.

A window of one room faced a window of the other. Each being on opposite sides of a triangle, as in the plan here shown—



The rooms were on the first floor with, therefore, a formidable drop into the area below.

Lord Dunraven and his friend passed from room A into room B, leaving Home in the former. He had gone to sleep, or, as he afterwards described it, "had fallen into a trance."

While Dunraven and friend were seated in B, discussing the pros and cons of spiritualism, his Lordship's attitude towards it being that of "philosophic doubt," a tapping was heard at the window, and turning towards it, they, to their amazement and horror,—for the result of a slip, on so small a space for standing securely as the ledge afforded, would have been fatal,—perceived Home erect on the ledge. Lord Dunraven opened the window, and Home entered.

He still appeared to be in a trance, and his action was that of a man walking in his sleep. He sat down ; and very gradually awoke.

Such is the plain unvarnished tale, for the truth of which Lord Dunraven vouched, though, he added, that he committed himself to no sort of opinion as to means whereby this phenomenon was produced. If Home's aërial flight had an object, that object must have been primarily to gain over entirely to his side this philosophic nobleman, whose support would have been of the greatest value to him socially, and therefore financially. In this object he failed. Lord Dunraven was puzzled : that was all. But how did Home contrive to open one window and at the risk of his life jump, for it was more than a mere step could have accomplished, from one ledge, on which he scarcely had a footing, to another that afforded him no greater rest for the sole of his foot, and all this without anything whatever to cling to ? I have never heard it explained ; and, personally, I find it impossible to explain on any ordinary *un-supernatural* hypothesis.

CHAPTER XXI

A NIGHT WITH THE SPIRITS—MRS. MARSHALL — E. L. BLANCHARD — THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS—THE PROFESSIONAL MEDIUM—A CURIOUS STORY—SHIRLEY BROOKS, DETEC- TIVE

WHILE on the subject of spiritualism that occupied the preceding chapter, it occurs to me that Edward Laman Blanchard, the "hero of a hundred pantomimes," dramatic critic, writer of amusing lyrics, and *raconteur* of any number of good and interesting theatrical stories, was also spiritualistically inclined. One evening he took me to a *séance* at Mrs. Marshall's, at that time a well-known professional medium in lodgings over a music-shop somewhere in the neighbourhood of Soho. It was not a *séance* arranged for beforehand, but was just an evening visit on the part of E. L. Blanchard, who evidently took the middle-aged lady quite by surprise, at least apparently so, as she received him with—

"Lor', Mr. Blanchard, 'ooever would ha' thought o' seein' *you* 'ere this evening!"

Then we sat down and chatted. I was introduced as an inquirer, and after a cup of tea, Mrs. Marshall was induced to give us "a sitting." I forget exactly what happened, as it was rather a dull affair. The only thing that

impressed me at all was something for which I could not in any way account satisfactorily.

It is usual, in Confirmation, for Catholics to take some saints' names, in addition to those bestowed on them in baptism. Now, of these I possess two that I have never used in any way, neither in signature nor in conversation.

During our *séance*, a spirit, so Mrs. Marshall informed us, wanted to speak to *me*. I gave it full permission to do so, without further introduction, not wishing to stand on any unnecessary ceremony; and I professed myself very delighted to hear from the spirit, whoever it was. I regret my inability to recall the individuality of this particular spirit. I have an indistinct recollection of its having been announced as my mother or sister. What I do remember is, my curiosity to ascertain if the spirit knew my Christian names, as, of course, if it were either of the two whom it professed to be, it would be familiar with them,—a “familiar” spirit. Blanchard was much interested, and Mrs. Marshall begged the spirit to be kind enough to rap out the letters spelling my Christian names. The rap began by giving “F,” and finding that was all right, went on spelling “Francis.” Now, my next initial, “C,” I thought, would be a puzzler. But it wasn’t, and “Cowley” was duly spelt by raps that stopped us at the required letters as we went through the alphabet on paper. Blanchard was pleased; Mrs. Marshall ditto; and I was a bit perplexed, though thinking it over quietly, it occurred to me that Blanchard might have known these names, that they had been published more than once in full, and that as by that date my name was pretty well known in theatrical circles, Mrs. Marshall might have received a casual intimation from Blanchard that perhaps one night he would look in and bring me for a *séance*, and that thereupon she had looked me up in some contemporary record and had mastered the little there

was to be learned on the subject. So there would have been an end of the matter, but for the rappings being persistent. Mrs. Marshall was surprised. Blanchard couldn't "make it out at all," like Daniel in the prize poem competition for the Newdigate, where it is recounted how—

"The King and courtiers by the sight appalled,
Begged to suggest that Daniel should be called;
When Daniel saw the writing on the wall,
At first he couldn't make it out at all."

So Mrs. Marshall too was clearly at fault. "Did their rappings apply to this gentleman," she asked, meaning me. "Yes," was the answer returned by two emphatic raps. They had been asked to give my Christian names and they hadn't completed the list to their satisfaction.

"Is this so?" inquired Mrs. Marshall, turning to me for an explanation.

I was bothered. "No; as far as I knew, their list was complete. My names were undoubtedly 'Francis' and 'Cowley.'"

"No others?" asked Mrs. Marshall suspiciously.

"Yes—by jingo!" I exclaimed, "I had forgotten! Yes, there *were* others."

"Shall the spirits spell them for you?"

I acquiesced. "Certainly. By all means."

Blanchard was utterly taken aback. "I didn't know you had any other names," he muttered. And as it seemed to me in this he gave himself away, and the medium too. I had recalled suddenly that I possessed two Confirmation names. But this I did not mention, not thinking that either Blanchard or Mrs. Marshall would understand the distinction.

The spirit rapped out "C."

"We've had that before," observed Mrs. Marshall, taking the spirit to task rather snappishly.

But the next letter, instead of being the "o" of "Cowley," was "h," and the next was "a," followed by "r l e s."

"Charles!" exclaimed Blanchard. "I never heard you called 'Charles'!"

The spirit went on in the most business-like manner—

"'Twas theirs to speak and ours to hear."

And it began with "P," and after spelling Paul, went on without a pause to rap out "Mary." The names being, in effect, connected by a hyphen. The three Confirmation names then were "Charles Paul-Mary," a fact I had recalled only a few moments before, and which, up to then, had entirely slipped out of my memory.

It was, as far as I can see, highly improbable, if not absolutely impossible, that Mrs. Marshall should have been acquainted with these names of mine; and I am convinced that Blanchard was entirely ignorant of the fact. I forget if I subsequently received a message from anyone; if I did, it was of no importance. I rather think the spirit of Frank Talfourd sent a polite message to me through Blanchard. And yet, *cui bono*, the revelation of the names going to the credit of the invisible witness, when beyond this it had nothing to say to me of a private and personal character?

I do not care to inquire too curiously; I never visited Mrs. Marshall again; I think we gave her half a sovereign between us for her trouble, and she did not "decline it with thanks." I am convinced that Blanchard was considerably puzzled, and I fancy that after this unexpected experience he paid less attention to the spiritual, and gave up more of his time to the material world. If so, the spirits, on this occasion, as in Dickens's Christmas story, did good without, perhaps, intending it; and I, who had gone there "to

scoff," came away "to pray" against all spirits of evil, and to determine that never, except for detection of serious frauds, or for mere nonsensical amusement, would I have any further communications with disembodied souls that upset weak-kneed persons as easily as they did chairs and tables.]

One more story on this subject, and I dismiss it from my reminiscences.

A professional medium appeared about this time, but, I think, a little later than Mr. Home, as to whose name I am uncertain, but fancy it was something like Anderson, and by permission of all the Andersons in the world, from "John Anderson, my Jo, John," down to the present day, I will at all events so dub this "professional" who is the principal character in my short spirit-story.

Shirley Brooks and myself were invited to a *séance* at the house of a mutual friend where we were to meet Mr. Anderson. There was a large party. On arriving, we gave our coats and hats to a spry-looking maid, with whom Shirley, who was "a merry man," amiably stopped to converse. Noticing that a number of overcoats and ladies' cloaks were already stowed away, and foreseeing some difficulty in claiming our own again when we should be leaving, Shirley presented the *soubrette* with a silver token, and requested her to put his coat and mine somewhere apart from the others. The maid, with alacrity, undertook to do so, saying, there was a little back room where she would bestow them. She suited the word to the deed, disappeared, returned without the encumbrances, and then we mounted to the drawing-room, to find a large gathering awaiting the arrival of the Seer.

In about half an hour's time Anderson appeared; not the wizard of that name, once celebrated as "The Wizard of the North," who became, for a while, lessee of Drury Lane Theatre, and finished his lease with a *bal-masqué* and a con-

flagration,—this *par parenthèse*,—but, Anderson the latest, *then*, from America, with a wonderful mediumistic reputation. Rather long brownish-greyish hair, intelligent face, slight figure, pleasant manner, and probably in the prime of life ; so pleasant was he indeed, that to a knowing person, not on the blind side of him, it was quite imaginable he “ could wink the other eye.”

To come to Hecuba : the feature of this evening was the *séance*. There were all sorts of manifestations : dark *séance* and light *séance* ; light *séance* and dark. Some became wearied, and went down for refreshments ; some left ; but we, Shirley and self, stayed on. And we were repaid.

A spirit was announced as wishing to give a message to the lady of the house. The message was trivial, as it appeared to me, but it evidently affected our host and hostess, the former of whom, a thorough believer in spiritualism, asked if the spirit were present who gave this message, or if he were only a spirit-messenger sent by someone else ? No ; it seemed to be the genuine article. Good ; then, if so, would he appear in his actual body, or whatever the term is. The spirit could not, for reasons, do this, but he would and could manifest himself to the vision of Mr. Anderson, through whom (though not all of us could see through him) his personality would be made evident to the earnest inquirers, who, perhaps, might be permitted to actually see him ; if not, at all events, they would “ hear from him.” The master of the house, prompted thereto by his believing wife, pressed the medium to describe the person whom he professed at that moment to see.

Anderson paused—shivered—gazed—and then said at intervals—“ soldierly-looking man—elderly—in uniform—but the lines are not clear.” Everyone was following him with the utmost attention. The host and hostess were painfully

interested. Anderson continued, "He looks grave . . . but happy . . . he points to his side . . . and . . ." here he was interrupted by some rapping on the table, when the word "India" was spelt out, then "heart, battle," and finally "We shall meet. I am happy."

Our hostess collapsed; her husband attended to her, and after a few more messages from some rather feeble spirits, and a few crooked answers to straightforward questions, Anderson terminated the *séance*, and we all trooped down in sections to supper. As the hostess did not reappear, and as Anderson left, having another engagement elsewhere, the guests reluctantly hurried over their supper, and we, Shirley and myself, had a short talk with the host, who explained that the spirit who had sent the message was that of his wife's father, long since dead but the particulars of whose death they had never rightly ascertained. This message was interpreted by them to mean that "in battle he had been shot through the heart," thus confirming the vague report they had received at the time. "It was," he said, "a great relief to his wife to learn that death had been instantaneous, and that he had passed from this world to a happier life." He begged Shirley, as one of his oldest friends, to excuse him for leaving the guests, and hoped we would remain as long as we could do justice to the supper. Then he retired, and we stayed until quite the last (we *could* sup in those days, at least *I* could fearlessly, but Shirley not without qualms concerning gout), being waited upon to our great content by the trim handmaiden on whom Shirley had previously bestowed *largesse*.

"Queer! the whole thing," quoth Shirley, sniffing as was his wont, and pulling out his cigar-case.

"Very," I replied, awaiting further expression of my learned senior's opinion, and accepting with thanks one of his cigars.

"Not strong?" I inquired, alluding to the tobacco.

"No, just suited to a spiritualistic *séance*," he replied, "medium."

"I can call spirits from the vasty deep," Shirley continued, emphasising the personal pronoun. "I can," he repeated. "And there's a good deal of the 'I'—only spelt differently—in this hanky-panky, eh? Let's get our coats. Where's our light comedy maiden?"

She was here. "Oh yes," she recollected; "of course, I put your things in the little room apart, with the other gentleman's who came late. I'll get a light."

We followed her. In a little room at the back, used evidently for odds and ends, and for ornaments and furniture as yet unplaced, she had placed our hats and coats.

"Here they are," she said cheerfully. "I was afraid at first as the other gentleman might have taken one by mistake."

"The other gentleman?" Shirley asked.

"Yes," quoth the chatty maiden, "the last as came."

"Oh, Mr. Anderson, you mean," quoth Shirley.

"Yes, sir," acquiesced the young woman, "he's an amusing gentleman; he was admiring all this lumber here, and asked quite a lot o' things."

"And," said Shirley, giving me a sly nudge as he stood staring up at a three-quarter length portrait of an officer in full uniform, "did he admire *that*?"

"Oh, indeed, sir, yes," she replied; "you know who it is, sir, p'raps?"

"Well," said Shirley, "I think I do. It is your mistress's father, General"—here he gave the name—"who was killed in India about a year or more ago."

"Ah," returned the maid, "I see you know the story. But that gentleman didn't, and he appeared so interested when I told him how much my mistress had taken it to heart,

and how this had only been done just before he went out. It's down here because it's waiting to be packed and go to the cleaners and framers before it's hung up in its proper place in the dining-room. They ought to ha' come for it yesterday."

"*How lucky for Anderson they didn't,*" whispered Shirley to me as we followed the maid to the front door, and bade her good-night.

"Lor', what a simple thing conjuring is when you only know how to do the trick!" exclaimed Shirley. "The artful chap had tipped that girl, as *we* had, by the way, but he got value for his money, full information, or, at all events, just the right tip at the right time. Tip for tip. I *am* glad we stopped to finish the supper."

"And that you tipped the maid," I added.

"Quite so," he rejoined; "depend upon it Thackeray was right when he said that a tip is never thrown away on a servant or a schoolboy. That's my tip to *you*, young man. *Bon soir!*"

We had come to the parting of the ways; he to Regent's Park and I to the Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden, which was occasionally my *pied à terre* when staying in town.

The mention of the dear, comfortable, old-fashioned Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden, of which Mrs. Warner, sister-in-law to Mark Lemon, was proprietress, reminds me that here for many years, during the summer holiday, our *Punch* Wednesday dinners were held, as at that season, only a few of the staff remaining in town, our gathering was necessarily small, being, indeed, on one occasion reduced to, if I rightly remember, three,—Mark, Shirley, the constant Percival Leigh, and myself. It was here that when living in the country I used to put up on a Wednesday night when, after our Cabinet Council in Bouverie Street, I was too late for my train. In the summer-time it was pleasant to drive up to

town in the morning, put up at the Langham stables, and drive down again after dinner, as I always preferred sleeping and waking, with the early birds, in the country.

To Hale Lodge, prettily situated in the lanes about Edgware and Mill Hill,—a locality then innocent of builders,—with a famous garden and wonderful old fruit trees (there were four mulberry trees and a good orchard), we, a considerable family party, moved from Belgrave Road; and there we settled for many years.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ROYALTY — HENDERSON — LIVERPOOL —
FRANK MUSGRAVE — NEW DEPARTURE —
ENGLISH *OPÉRA BOUFFE*—FARNIE—HONOUR
AMONGST GENTLEMEN—J. S. CLARKE—AT
EDGWARE—ARTHUR SKETCHLEY—GEORGE
ROSE—COLLABORATION—SOTHERN—A MIS-
TAKE—*THE HEADLESS MAN*—THE TRUE
STORY OF *THE COLONEL*—HOW IT FAILED
AT REHEARSAL—HAYMARKET TRIAL TRIP
—REMARKABLE SUCCESS AT PRINCE OF
WALES' — AT ABERGELDIE CASTLE — BY
ROYAL COMMAND—*BLUE BEARD*—*ARIEL*—
COLONEL COLLETTE — HARKING BACK — A
REVELATION—FREDDY CLAY COMMUNICA-
TIVE—THE RESULT

IT was through my pieces at the Royalty that I became acquainted with Alexander Henderson, then lessee of the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool. He was an "odd mixture," partly horse-dealer, partly theatrical manager, Scotch by birth, Australian for a considerable portion of his life; 'cute and "as hard as nails" in business, kind when dealing with members of his theatrical company, and with a *côte faible*, most decidedly *faible*; when "woman, lovely woman," was concerned; with the emphasis on the "lovely." It would be a great stretch of imagination

to assert that he ever came off second best in a bargain until he fell in with Mr. Farnie, a clever adapter of light French *opéras bouffes*. This style of entertainment very soon superseded burlesque at the Strand Theatre, where Mons. Marius and Florence St. John, with Edward Terry for low comedian, were the attractions. Henderson had got the Swanborough Family, then the proprietors of the Strand, well in hand, and he and Farnie, in effect, "ran that show," and ran it with success. It was quite in keeping with the theory of legitimate development of theatrical tastes that this class of entertainment should follow and grow out of what H. J. Byron had begun, what I had continued, what Frank Musgrave, conductor, indifferent musician, but uncommonly clever caterer for the public, in conjunction with myself, had hit upon, when, under the Swanborough *régime*, we, collaborating, produced operatic burlesque pieces, such as *Windsor Castle*, with Musgrave's original music. Frank Musgrave had no education, musical or otherwise, but he could turn out a catchy popular tune, could score it sufficiently well for a small orchestra, had a keen sense of humour, and was a first-rate stage-manager. *Windsor Castle* was a great success, David James being inimitable as the jester; Miss Raynham, one of the best "boys" ever seen on the stage, capital as the youthful Henry VIII.; Tom Thorne, delightful as Anne Boleyn, with an imitation French song (burlesquing those much in vogue at the time); and Fenton played the pantomime part of Herne the Hunter, after the manner of the late Mr. George Conquest, who used to disappear suddenly down traps and reappear as suddenly up traps, be shot several feet up in the air, always arriving on his feet, with an energy and indiscretion that left nothing to be desired. Undoubtedly with Frank Musgrave (who was succeeded by another sharp little conductor and composer, Fitzgerald) English *opéra bouffe*, superseding

burlesque, was started by me at this theatre, where subsequently Henderson and Farnie took it up; Edward Terry being the only one of the old company remaining (for James and Thorne had gone into partnership at the Vaudeville Theatre) as the principal *comique* in the novel entertainment, which, French in its origin, soon became firmly established at this little house. From here it spread itself out to Henderson's little theatre in King William Street, subsequently Toole's, which, having served at one time as a hall for Woodin's entertainments, at another as a wine office, and also as the first Oratorian chapel in London, has now disappeared altogether.

Farnie exactly suited Henderson. They were both Scotch, Farnie's accent being as broad as was his habitual way of expressing himself. He was a burly swaggerer, his coarse manner having developed itself, *pari passu*, with his rise in the world. He came into the work just at the psychological moment when theatrical business affairs were on the turn, and when the new men, if as sharp and business-like as was Farnie,—he was son of a Scotch factor, and obtained his first start in life through his father's employer, who told me this himself, prefacing his information by inquiring if I happened to know "Young Farnie,"—could make terms at which our predecessors Planché, Sterling Coyne, the Brothers Brough, Tom Taylor, Maddison Morton, Bayle Bernard, and others would have been utterly amazed.

So Farnie became Henderson's right-hand man, with access to the right pocket. It was diamond cut diamond, but Farnie was free and easy, and Henderson was neither the one nor the other; and so it chanced that when Farnie and Henderson quarrelled, which happened about three times a year, Henderson was the first to hold out the hand of fellowship, and as quickly as possible, as otherwise he

felt himself helpless; while Farnie, a clever stage-manager, and being, as composer and author, "in" with the music publishers and also a power with musical and dramatic artists, could do for himself what Henderson could not achieve without him. Not that Alexander Henderson did not try to shake himself free of Farnie; but though a man could have been found able to do all that Farnie could, yet Henderson failed to find one who was ready and willing to do all that Farnie did. By the way, I think it was H. J. Byron who on being asked "What is Farnie doing now?" replied readily, "Doing? Oh—Henderson." So after many attempts at obtaining any confidential agent who should be all to him that Farnie had been, Alexander Henderson used to give up the struggle, and once again would be seen the touching spectacle of these two walking together and enjoying each other's society as if there had never been the slightest suspicion of a difficulty between them.

How I have heard Henderson abuse Farnie, and how within two days afterwards I have heard him lavish in his praises of him!

"When thieves fall out," etc.—"the proverb is somewhat musty." But note the present application of it.

I received an anonymous letter at the Garrick Club from "a friend who did not wish to see me robbed *à mon insu*," bidding me compare the version of an *opéra bouffe* by Farnie, then appearing at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool, with an extravaganza of mine (published) that had been performed in London a year or two before. To particularise the piece is now unessential to the issue. Some pages of Farnie's extravaganza, privately printed for the theatre, were enclosed, and at Lacy's in the Strand I procured a copy of my own burlesque. In those days I did not mistrust or look askance at anonymous correspondence;

to receive such a note was for me a novelty. I read it and acted upon it. The next step I took was "to consult a solicitor" (old George Lewis—I think it was, the father, or uncle, of the présent Baronet, who was then permanent solicitor to the Dramatic Authors' Society until, on his retirement, he was replaced by Mr. T. H. Bolton, who retained the office until the Society dissolved itself), by whom I was advised in the first instance to ascertain the facts from Henderson, and if he afforded me no assistance, then to "go for" H. B. Farnie, who had simply taken handfuls out of my piece and inserted them *verbatim* in his extravaganza, *opéra bouffe*, or whatever he called it.

So an appointment with Henderson was made and kept. It happened to be at a season of the year when Henderson and Farnie were at daggers drawn. Henderson took a high moral tone about the matter (his acting was a perfect bit of comedy), and promised that Farnie, who had made money by the production at Henderson's theatre (where Henderson had evidently not made as much as he had expected, even if he had not been a loser), should hand over to me at least a hundred pounds, which he considered (judicially speaking) might fairly represent the sum in which Farnie would have been "cast in damages."

So in the strangers' smoking-room of the Garrick Club on the following day Henderson turned up, bringing his Farnie with him.

Farnie in broad Scotch accent said he was glad to make my acquaintance, paid a compliment (not overdone) to the work of which he had already given his genuine opinion by prigging from it for his own use, avowing himself quite ready to pay up a hundred pounds, as a fine, and to cancel the lines in his piece.

I accepted his offer if, that is to say, he was prepared to pay up at once, when I would give him a receipt.

"Quite ready," he said, and sitting down he drew up the agreement, according to the terms aforesaid. I perused the document, and was ready to sign on receiving the cheque.

Henderson had a cheque-book in his pocket.

"We bank at the same place," quoth Farnie, "and, by the bye, Henderson, you owe me a hundred pounds."

A dispute followed on this. It terminated, however, on their giving me two cheques for fifty each, one signed by Farnie and the other by Henderson. So we parted; or rather, so *they* "parted," and I left them. Henderson was delighted at having brought Farnie to book; Farnie also was pleased at having made Henderson share the loss, as, if it hadn't been for their quarrel, I should never have heard a word about the matter; and I was comparatively satisfied, being in considerable doubt as to whether I had not let both of them off far too easily. I say "both," because Henderson had known all about it from the first, and had turned king's evidence; while Farnie would have implicated Henderson in it still further, and would have had the fine increased and borne by Henderson, *perhaps exclusively*, if the latter had refused to pay half the amount of damages claimed. The fact is that I ought to have received a fair proportion of the profits, which were on the percentage scale, and, as I subsequently ascertained, five hundred would have been nearer the mark than one, as I could have rightly and justly claimed my due as "part-author."

However as to me it was a hundred pounds *à surprise*, I pocketed the cheque and let the subject drop. Of course the anonymous letter to me came from Henderson.

It is just possible that Henderson might have had to pay it all, and that in law Farnie might have had his action against him. For Farnie might have prigged from my piece in utter ignorance; Henderson might have had the

lines written out and given to him to be introduced, representing them as written by someone in whom he had an interest.

That this is not so very improbable I may instance from the case of Mr. John Sleeper Clarke, the eccentric, but somewhat monotonous, American comedian, and myself. I undertook to write him a piece on the lines of a plot which he suggested. The plot, he said, was his own idea and the bits of dialogue for certain situations were, he said, also his own invention. To these situations of his, illustrated by (as he professed) *his* dialogue, I worked up loyally, though as I went on I liked the job less and less. The piece on production was a failure, the only scene in it which was a success being one between three men, Coghlan, William Farren, and John Clayton, so well played as to merit the recall of the three comedians; and this scene was purely my own invention, the dialogue my own writing. All the other scenes with J. S. Clarke in them went for nothing.

More than one criticism on it pointed out that I had boldly plagiarised from a not very old comedy called *The Knights of the Round Table*. Before I denied this charge I bought the book. I found that *all the situations and such scraps of dialogue with which Mr. John Sleeper Clarke had furnished me were actually in this play!*

I went to Clarke; he didn't deny it; he "thought I knew it," he said. Then I "wrote to the papers" (a very unsatisfactory performance in any case), and got into some further thankless correspondence with the *Times* and its dramatic critic, and then nothing more was heard of the play. Nobody lost over it except, I suppose, Clarke (though I am not so sure about this) and myself. So to hark back to Henderson and Farnie, the former might have played Clarke to Farnie's "myself," and I should have been in error had I blamed Farnie instead of Henderson.

Our little house at Edgware being easy of access from town by rail or road (there is no river, hence the drawback of that situation), was visited by "troops of friends," literary, professional, and unprofessional, and among them the figure of one especially remains in my mind's eye, namely, that of George Rose, known to the world at large as "Arthur Sketchley," author of *Mrs. Brown*. He was rather under than over the average height, but very stout, and as he grew older he became more and more corpulent. Once he attempted Falstaff, but in this character he was not within measurable distance (round the waist) of Mark Lemon, who had appeared in it years before. Strange to say that though both men were, in their different lines, full of humour, rollicking in their fun and drollery, and both possessed of the strongest appreciation of wit in others (in this direction Mark Lemon was by far the more generously disposed, in consequence probably of his long experience as editor of *Punch*), yet when they donned the clothes, padding, and make-up of the fat knight, both of them became the pitiable personifications of good men struggling with adversity. Mark as Falstaff was in size and manner considerably superior to George Rose, but, like George Rose, when with his war paint on, all those qualities, for which a critic would have specially selected him to personify Falstaff, almost entirely disappeared. Mark dressed the part perfectly, after Sir John Tenniel's delightful and most accurately devised picture. George Rose dressed Falstaff just as suited the costumier's fancy, and the consequence was, that, attired in brightish colours and a ruff, his appearance suggested that of an obese Punchinello *minus* the hump. Mark started his performance at the Gallery of Illustration in Waterloo Place, and then went "on tour" with his small company (among whom was at first Linley Sambourne, if I remember rightly) in the provinces; but George Rose, many years after, as I

have said, made his one and only trial trip at the Olympic Theatre at a matinée, and then, as Falstaff, he was "heard no more," his "brief candle" (as I might have said of my own distinguished appearance at the bar) having gone out with a sputter.

As an entertainer in one particular line, that is when narrating the adventures and giving supposed imitations of the style of "Mrs. Brown" (who was an article manufactured out of Sheridan's *Mrs. Malaprop*, Dickens's *Mrs. Gamp*, and Hook's *Mrs. Rambotham*), he was most amusing, made a great success and a fair amount of money. But off that platform he was of little use as a public entertainer. In private life George Rose was delightful, full of anecdote, ready with appreciation, with strong likes and dislikes, and an excellent companion. Besides this he was a thoroughly good man, without any affectation of piety, liberal, generous, and a most hearty, not to say devoted, Catholic. He had begun life as an evangelical (he was of Scotch origin), but Oxford was responsible for making him a Newmanite (he was too hard-headed and logical to have ever been, or to have remained, a Puseyite), and after a brief career as an Anglican clergyman in London,—he was, as Mr. W. S. Gilbert says, "a pale young curate then,"—he was received into the Catholic Church by Cardinal, then Dr., Manning. And this, by the way, was the only experience George Rose ever had of the Cardinal, as within a week after his becoming a Catholic he called on Dr. Manning, who, aware that George Rose as a "convertite" had given up his Anglican curacy, "the means by which he lived" (for his own income was as slender as was his own figure at that period when development had only shown itself spiritually and not corporeally), at once suggested to him that he should proceed to Rome, study for the priesthood, be ordained, and enter upon clerical work wherever he might be sent "on the mission." This

did not suit George at all ; he had made one mistake in becoming an Anglican parson, and he was not going to make the still more fatal one (that is, fatal to any person without a vocation,—“ *not* called as was Aaron”) of becoming a Catholic priest. Therefore he firmly but respectfully declined Dr. Manning’s offer ; and Dr. Manning, whose hobby it was that any convert who had been an Anglican clergyman should therefore become a Catholic priest, was rather chagrined by the refusal, and, figuratively speaking, washed his hands of any further interference in George Rose’s affairs.

So George began to look about him, and then his Oxford training stood him in good stead, and he obtained the appointment of tutor to Lord Arundel, the present Duke of Norfolk. Here he remained for some years, and had no better friend than the late Duke. George Rose was greatly in favour of letting the young Duke go to Eton in company with some other Catholic noblemen of his own age ; but though this idea—it never developed into a plan, much less a scheme—was regarded favourably by no less a person than John Henry Newman, D.D. (not then promoted to the rank of Cardinal), yet it was absolutely scouted by Henry Edward Manning, Archbishop of Westminster, in succession to Cardinal Wiseman, and certainly did not meet with the approval of the majority of the English Catholic ecclesiastical authorities, who took care so to represent the matter at headquarters that the notion of starting a Catholic house at Eton as a “ Dame’s House,” such as was Tarver’s, the French master’s, Miss Myddleton’s, Evans’s, the drawing master’s, and others, was entirely abandoned. Thus a rather attractive scheme, which, if carried out under certain religious safeguards, would have been for the social advantage (I limit the advantage to “ social”) of English Catholics, fell to the ground. The Reverend Father Faber expressed himself as unfavourable

to this plan of education, and he was *de la première force* at that time in the counsels of the ducal house of Norfolk. It was amusing to hear poor George Rose on Manning and Faber. The little Lord Arundel's education was taken in hand by the Oratorians (I forget whether he went to Dr. Newman's at Edgbaston, which perhaps had not at that time been started as "the Catholic Eton"), and George Rose's occupation, so far, was gone. Up to the last both the old Duke and the present one were most friendly towards George Rose. As I have elsewhere said, George Rose became a constant visitor at the house of Charles Mathews, and was a great friend of Henry J. Byron, also of Clement Scott of the *Daily Telegraph*, who "alone remains" of that trio "to tell the tale." George Rose, away from his *Mrs. Brown*, never achieved anything worth mentioning. He started a paper which included W. S. Gilbert among its contributors. I fancy the paper was called *Mrs. Brown's Budget*, but it did not succeed, and indeed George himself, oddly enough, had a heavy method and an old-fashioned style when he once got a pen into his hand and worked alone. He was great fun as a *collaborateur*, and we had the pleasantest time possible when we wrote together a little musical sketch for the Alhambra, and when he assisted me in developing an idea which I had conceived for a part for Sothern. And thereby hangs a tale.

I had hit upon a first-rate eccentric character. It was originated in some papers I was at that time writing for *Punch*. The idea for the hero of the comedy was "a man with a method"; a man who considered himself as so methodical that he was always lecturing others on the advantages of his own system as compared with *their* negligent way of doing business, while in reality there never was such a muddle-headed person as this monomaniac. Three characters in three other different pieces evidently started

this idea. First, the part of *Messiter* in *A Nice Firm*, a piece (original I believe) by Tom Taylor ; secondly, Bayle Bernard's *The Practical Man* (I had played at Cambridge in both pieces) ; thirdly, a Mr. Somebody in a one-act piece, the name of which I quite forget, nor do I think it was ever published, a part wonderfully played by Charles Mathews, of a man whose brains went wool-gathering and who could not be constant to one idea for three minutes at a stretch. From acquaintance with these sprang the notion of a "man with a method," triumphant in all his errors, while hopelessly embroiling himself and everybody who might come in contact with him in any affair of more or less importance. I had decided he was to be a solicitor ; that he was to be a married man, and I had a vague idea of various situations, and a very clear notion on the subject of dialogue and detail. But for the life of me I could not invent a plot. The character I had created was as the monster to *Frankenstein*. So when George Rose was staying with us at Hale Lodge I asked him if he could provide me with a plot. This he undertook to do most willingly. It began well ; it offered the required opportunities ; but I felt it was thin. However, we went to work, and I am bound to say the work was play. Many a pleasant summer morning we passed in my study at Hale Lodge composing this *Headless Man*, and always with a view to its performance by Charles Mathews. When, however, it neared completion, we expressed our doubts as to whether Mathews, then over seventy years of age, speaking not so distinctly as heretofore, but acting with all his old *verve* and charm, and playing in one or two new pieces too, could really *study* this part. We were afraid, very much afraid, that he could not. Unfortunately, as George Rose had excited Charles Mathews' curiosity by telling him a good deal about the piece, it seemed to me that, at least, we were bound to show it him. This we did, and he professed himself

ready to play it at the very first opportunity. That opportunity never came, and after the death of Charles Mathews we determined that the next best person, with whom to place it, was Sothern, who had not had such a "character" part since the days of Dundreary. To him we confided it. Sothern accepted it ; said there was a lot to be done with it, and kept it for some considerable time. However, what will happen in "the affairs of mice and men" occurred here. I quarrelled with Sothern, or rather Sothern quarrelled with me, about no business affair whatever, but owing to a view I took of his conduct in a certain matter that really in no way concerned me and about which I might, without any loss of self-esteem, have been silent as far as he was personally concerned, seeing that my knowledge of the affair only came to me at second-hand. However, quixotically, I made a false step in refusing an invitation to dinner from Sothern, and, quite unnecessarily, stating the reason, in strong terms, for such refusal. The reply to this was the return of our *Headless Man*, and then I realised that my partner George Rose had suffered through *me*.

It appeared subsequently, however, that Sothern had retained his own private copy of the play, which, as I learned long afterwards, he confided to Charles Wyndham (then a rising light comedian who, since the days of *Black Eye'd Susan* and his famous dance on the Royalty boards, had forsworn burlesque), telling Charles Wyndham that he was at liberty to produce it, and pointing out how it could be advantageously altered and amended. Mistrusting the practical-joker Sothern and the story with which the play was introduced to him, Wyndham sagaciously kept it by him for some time, until Sothern, moved by a good impulse, requested him not to do anything with it, but, if he fancied it, he was to communicate with the authors, whose names he then for the first time revealed. I liked Sothern very much ; he was most amusing,

and we had passed many a pleasant time together. I think we both regretted the estrangement, and I say "both" advisedly, as one day going along Garrick Street I suddenly encountered Sothern. My quarrel with him had quite gone out of my memory, and that he had momentarily forgotten the rupture of friendly relations between us was evident from his advancing to me, with both his hands out, as I was approaching him in just the same attitude, our faces beaming with pleasure at the meeting.

"Hullo! Sothern!" I exclaimed heartily.

"Hullo! old fellow!" cried Sothern, with equal heartiness.

And then—a pause. The idea evidently struck us both at the same instant,—

"Why, we're not on speaking terms!"

And he turned aside and entered the Garrick Club laughing, I am positive, as I turned and went my way, giving way to irrepressible mirth. The situation was of the best and truest comedy; a real "comedy of errors." And it was one which oddly enough existed in the very piece written for Mathews, passed on to him, and by him to Charles Wyndham, whose performance of the principal character has been placed by good critics as one of the most artistic creations in his varied *répertoire*. The lack of female interest in the piece has, I fancy, militated against its popularity, yet it went for six weeks or so with roars of laughter, and was played "to excellent business," which suddenly dropped, and then the piece dropped too, having been only occasionally revived as a "stop-gap."

George Rose, known by his *nom de plume* of Arthur Sketchley, was never "on" *Punch*. The Sketchley on *Punch* was R. F. Sketchley, of the South Kensington Library, who was brought on to the staff in Mark Lemon's time, being then introduced by Tom Taylor; but Mrs. Brown's

Sketchley never did anything for *Punch* until my editorship. He contributed regularly to *Fun*, where *Mrs. Brown* first appeared, but only occasionally, after Tom Hood (junior, of course) had ceased to conduct that paper.

I think I might head my next "reminiscence" with "*How the Colonel achieved Success: A Tale with a Moral for Dramatic Authors and Managers.*"

One morning to my study at our house in Russell Square came "B.," i.e. Bancroft, as Sir Squire Bancroft was then known among his intimates, with a suggestion for a comedy. He brought with him a copy of *The Serious Family*, by Bayle Bernard, and the original French play, *Un Mari à la Campagne*, from which the aforesaid B. B. had derived his English version.

"Of course," observed "B." with impressive solemnity, "this old stuff has long since past and gone. But I'm sure there's something in it, if you can only bring the piece 'up to date.' What can be substituted for the—er—the religious craze of that time which was then satirised?"

At the moment, and off-hand, I could not say, not being familiar with the original as played at the Haymarket many years before I had ever thought of getting my livelihood by "devoting myself" to dramatic literature. So I asked Bancroft to leave it with me and let me consider the matter, and in a very short time I would communicate to him the result.

When he repeated his visit I had the *scenario* of the play pretty well ship-shape. The leading idea that I had adopted was the æsthetic craze of that time, which George du Maurier had already pictorially satirised, and was still satirising in *Punch* with his well-known characters of *Maudle* and *Postlethwaite*. The "Maudles" and Postlethwaites" had raised, or lowered, "æstheticism" to a "cult." Of course, it was very easy to perceive that it was only a matter of

transferring the humbugs of an earlier period of the Victorian era to a later. *Tartufe* remains *Tartufe*, clothe him how you will. Bancroft was enthusiastically pleased with the idea ; and the terms for the new comedy on the old lines were arranged.

When I had nearly finished the play, two acts of it were read at the Haymarket. The reception of the piece, so far, by the assembled company, was freezingly polite. The green-room was like a parrot house in chilly weather, where all the parrots "thought the more." While engaged on writing the third act, the first was put into rehearsal. Somehow it would *not* come out as we wished. Bancroft, as stage-manager, was most precise and emphatic, not a movement was lost, not a stage direction of the most microscopic character but received his most earnest attention. Attention to details—that way genius lies. And both Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft were as perfect in this respect as they were unrivalled in their separate "lines of business" on the stage.

But no—the piece was obstinately unsatisfactory. Then I put it (by request) into two acts, exerting considerable ingenuity to ensure its failure at rehearsal. After trying the piece and our patience alike, the Bancrofts decided that they would put it aside for further consideration, hoping, with Mr. Micawber, that, "something would turn up." And in the meantime I might do what I liked with the play.

I was considerably chagrined. But as luck would have it, the old Prince of Wales's Theatre, which the Bancrofts had "made," and which had made the Bancrofts (chiefly *per* Tom Robertson's plays to start with and then their own excellent discretion in management to carry on and finish with), had come into the hands of Edgar Bruce and his partner, "Teddy" Claremont (with whose name, as

connected with theatrical professional matters, I was entirely unacquainted), and to Edgar Bruce I sent, telling him I had a piece they could put on in three weeks. Bruce and Claremont called the next evening. I read the piece to them in its original form of three acts. After a brief consultation, during which, with delicate tact I quitted the room, they decided on trying it, and agreed to pay me so much percentage on the takings; an agreement of which the terms were far more beneficial to me than had been those on which the piece would have been played at the Haymarket. But I had B.'s free permission, as I have said, to do what I liked with it (the suggestion having originally come from *him*), as he laid no claim whatever to any rights in what he probably looked upon as an ultimate failure, whatever purpose it might temporarily serve. By the way, how it chanced that I ever thought of Edgar Bruce and Claremont I will reserve until the story of *The Colonel* is finished.

Then said Edgar Bruce and his partner as under a common inspiration, "Coghlan's our man for the Colonel." I agreed. I did not know much of Mr. Coghlan, but his playing in some of the Prince of Wales's pieces during the Bancroft management had attracted general and very favourable attention.

Then they went to work at the cast, and to their choice I gave in my adhesion from first to last.

Mr. Fernandez was to be the Arch-humbug, Miss Myra Holmes (now Mrs. Pinero) was to be the plastic wife (charmingly she played it), and Miss Amy Roselle (poor Amy Roselle, alas!) the gay and dashing widow.

Charles Coghlan coquetted with the offer, and stipulated that, before accepting the chief rôle, he must hear the play read. So we had another reading—a delightful one. Never was such an audience of three! Two enthusiasts, taking

all the points (as knowing them beforehand), and "the third person present" coming with an entirely "open mind," showed himself a "third person singular." The reading took place at night, between half-past eleven and two. Charles Coghlan wavered, but yielded reluctantly to the majority, and before he left he had agreed, pending certain conditions (of his own making) being accepted by the management, to play the part of "Colonel Woottweell Wood."

The next day came a message to inform me that all was satisfactorily arranged. Coghlan was freed by the two managers from temporary financial difficulties, and could walk in and out of the theatre without having to face his fellow-man with a writ in his hand. Then followed the reading of the piece to a company all freezingly unemotional, except Miss Holmes and Mrs. Leigh Murray. The parts had been all copied out, and we set to work in earnest rehearsing all day and every day, and finally, when the theatre, which was doing uncommonly bad business, was closed, we called our rehearsals at night.

Oh, those rehearsals! I have had a considerable experience of this most interesting preparation for production, during which all concerned, but more especially the author, if he, single-handed, undertakes the "staging" of his piece, go through every phase of hope, satisfaction, and utter despair, culminating in the blankest ignorance as to what will be the probable result when the work, as a whole, comes before the public from whose judgment there is no court of final appeal. A most anxious time is it for everybody in any way connected with the piece if they all are as thoroughly "heart and soul in it" as necessarily must be the author. But when the company, instead of sharing his trouble, as part "bearers of the burden," are, if not absolutely against him, at least totally indifferent, then the strain is almost

too much for that author to bear, unless he be in the prime of life with plucky determination and a store of good temper to carry him through. An author in these conditions—very, very rare I am glad to remember—must know his own mind, must be able to give a reason for every line, for every movement, and *must never attempt to rehearse a single scene of which he has not every detail of every situation at his fingertips.*

I shall never forget Fernandez telling me with grim courtesy that, "of course, he would carry out all my directions and would not venture to offer any suggestion of his own." Much the same said Coghlan. Charles Hawtrey¹ and his brother were too new to the stage and too glad to get an engagement to offer either assistance or opposition, and my only comforters were Mrs. Leigh Murray, Myra Holmes, and Amy Roselle, who really did their very best to make the rehearsals as pleasant as they possibly could be in the circumstances.

¹ Mr. Charles Hawtrey was not in *The Colonel* as originally cast, but his brother George was: the latter played the part of a footman. I well remember my astonishment when, on leaving the theatre after one of the first rehearsals, I was met on the steps by a stout young man with an elderly manner, accompanied by a tall, boyish-faced younger man, who, in a kind of pleasant duet, introduced themselves to me as the "Hawtrey Brothers from Eton," and reminded me of their father and uncle, who, in my time, when these unexpected visitors were very small boys in the lowest forms of existence were among those "that held rule over us" at Eton. Personally, as Stephen Hawtrey was, in my day, an "extra," teaching arithmetic and mathematics, and as John Hawtrey was a lower school master with an entirely lower school house set, I never came across either of them officially, and to me they were only names, although "familiar in my ears as household words." Charles Hawtrey never played *The Colonel*, but took the part of Forrester (*Le Mari à la Campagne*) on tour; and all Charles did in the piece in London was to appear as the nice young man, the lover, originally played by Eric Bailey. This did "Charles, our friend" (and most people's), from September 1881 to the end of June 1882.

The piece was announced, and the last rehearsal on the night before production was almost heart-breaking, especially at the finish, when, for some reason or another (the fault here was entirely mine), I could not for the life of me bring about the fall of the curtain with a genuine "snap" that, if the issue were at all doubtful, should secure a favourable verdict. The ending was ragged. And after trying several methods of finishing it, after wearying everyone of the whole thing, after so tiring some of the actors who lived at a distance from the theatre that they protested, if not allowed to go home, they could not come to read over the piece (by way a sort of very, very last "refresher") in the morning, much less could they play at night, I consented to the dismissal of everyone, and all were pledged to come at eleven the following morning, by which time I guaranteed that the last few lines would be ready. So we all went our several ways, and I retired to my study to sit up working at the manuscript until I could get just the very finish which, if there was to be any hesitation, would clinch the matter in favour of a verdict for the piece. It was then that "a happy thought" occurred to me. The old lady and her hypocritical adviser suddenly appear on the scene when her daughter and her husband are giving a dance. They are horrified at the waltzing. "What!" she exclaims. "Is this a rebellion?" "No," explains the Colonel, waving his hand to the time of the waltz; "it's a revolution."

That started the finish. A few lines, a little "business" [for the exit of the objectionable party of three, Streyke and his nephew with the old dowager], and the evident happiness of the three couples who resume the waltz to the jubilant strains of the orchestra, brought down the curtain on a heartily acclaimed success. Not for a moment had it been in doubt, as I heard afterwards, although there

were "friends in front" quite prepared to condemn it on account of its attack on sham æstheticism. But these favourers of the new heresy were in a minority, and to my astonishment the verdict was a genuinely popular one, obtained unexpectedly from the pit and gallery, who were enthusiastic. For my part I had spent a very, very anxious evening. I had dined at the *Punch* table (it was produced on a Wednesday), and arriving during the first act, I went up to Coghlan's room. He was on the stage; nervously I inquired of his "dresser" how the piece was going, and the dresser gave me a half-hearted sort of answer. But at that moment I heard a burst of laughter, then another and another, and up rushed Coghlan for a pocket-handkerchief or something he had forgotten; thank goodness it was not for any of his 'lines.' He was in a great state of excitement; all his assumed *nonchalance* had vanished, and he shouted to me hurriedly, "It's all right, my boy! going first-rate! If it only keeps up like this, it's a *big* success!" and down he went again. I remained in his room; but not until Claremont and Bruce had come up to assure me that it was all right and "an enormous go," did I venture on to the stage, where, from the prompt side, I witnessed the third act, and felt indescribably relieved when I had "taken my call," which was hearty and unanimous, specially from pit and gallery as aforesaid, and the curtain was down for the last time. Then came the hand-shaking; then came mutual congratulations all round: the author's thanks, the manager's delight, and the general contentment, with only one note of alarm to disturb our well-earned repose, and that was "Ah! but what will the notices say to-morrow!"

The notices, however, were good all round, and within a few days the little theatre was as crammed full as ever it had been in the palmiest season of the Bancrofters. And

it ran, ran, ran. Over a year. Then came its success in the provinces, and finally Her Gracious Majesty, who had not been to a theatre, nor, if I remember aright, had there been any performance at Balmoral since the death of Prince Albert, was persuaded at the instance of His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales (now King Edward), to command the company of the Prince of Wales's Theatre (the name of the playhouse must have been *pour quelque chose* in the matter) to give a performance before their Royal Highnesses and the Court at Balmoral, the Queen being present, and to bring *The Colonel* with them. The cast, as here follows, copied from the satin bill of the play, was not the original one as first given at the Prince of Wales's.

I here reproduce the special programme :—

" ABERGELDIE CASTLE,
Tuesday, 4th October 1881.

" Mr. Edgar Bruce, having been honoured with the kind permission of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales to give a private performance at Abergeldie Castle, begs to introduce the following ladies and gentlemen of his company—in the cast of

THE COLONEL,

Written by Mr. F. C. Burnand.

Colonel Woottweell W. Wood, U.S.

Cavalry	.	.	.	.	Mr. EDGAR BRUCE.
Richard Forrester	.	.	.	.	Mr. C. W. GARTHORNE.
Lambert Streyke	.	.	.	.	Mr. W. F. HAWTREY.
Basil Giorgioni	.	.	.	.	Mr. LY. GRAHAM.
Edward Langton	.	.	.	.	Mr. LILFORD ARTHUR.
Mullins	.	.	.	.	Mr. SMILY.
Parkes	.	.	.	.	Mr. A. HELMORE.
Romelli	.	.	.	.	Mr. W. H. LAMBERT.
Lady Tompkins	.	.	.	.	Miss GLOVER.

Olive	.	.	.	.	.	Miss C. GRAHAM.
Nellie	.	.	.	.	.	Miss M. SIDDONS.
Mrs. Blythe	.	.	.	.	.	Miss H. LINDLEY.
Goodall	.	.	.	.	.	Miss WARLHOUSE.

Act. 1. SEVERITY. *At Mr. Forrester's.*

Act 2. LAXITY. *At Mrs. Blythe's. A Flat on Fourth Floor.*

Act. 3. LIBERTY. *At Mr. Forrester's—next evening."*

Mr. Edgar Bruce's cast, as above given, constituted the principal company then on tour with the piece, while the original cast, simultaneously appearing in the comedy at the Prince of Wales's Theatre in town, was—

Mr. Charles Coghlan (*the Colonel*), Mr. W. Herbert (*Dick Forrester*), Mr. J. Fernandez (*Lambert Streyke*), Mr. R. Buckstone (*Basil Giorgioni*), Mr. Eric Bailey (*Edward Langton*), Mr. Rowley (*Mullins*), Mr. C. Cecil (*Parkes*), Mr. Grey (*Romelli*), Mrs. Leigh Murray (*Lady Tompkins*), Miss Myra Holmes (*Olive*), Miss C. Graham (*Nellie*), Miss Amy Roselle (*Mrs. Blythe*), Miss Houston (*Goodall*).

The above was the cast when the piece was first produced under Mr. Edgar Bruce's management, February 2, 1881.

By the way, as showing what a change has come over the amusements of London by evening and night at this period, I will quote an extract from the then "up-to-date" dialogue, which exemplifies the transformation that had taken place during the Colonel's long absence in India. He is proposing a "night out," and he says—

"We'll begin at Evans's."

Forrester. "It's closed."

Colonel. "Surrey Gardens."

For. "Closed."

Col. "Highbury Barn—Coal Hole—Cider Cellars."

For. "Closed—closed—closed."

Col. “Well, then, we’ll just look in at the Arg”—

For. “The Arg”—

Streyke. “The Gyle’s closed. No ‘Gyle. Everything’s closed.”

“What a place!” exclaims the Colonel; “give me life in Paris!”

“Take it,” says Streyke, handing him the Railway Guide. “Here’s Bradshaw.”

“Thanks,” returns the Colonel, putting it aside; “I know it by heart.”

This piece was written four years after my comedy of *Family Ties*, in which the French-English actor, Marius, made a marked success at the little Strand (1877), three years after *Our Club*, another “big Strand success,” and six years before *Blue Beard* at the Gaiety, which was, as far as I can remember, the first of the burlesques in three acts, thus breaking away entirely from the old form of telling the story in five consecutive scenes without an interval. *Ariel* was the last of my burlesques at the Gaiety under Mr. John Hollingshed’s management, in which Nellie Farren played; but *Ariel* was not within measurable distance of *Blue Beard*, and if it fairly served Miss Nellie Farren’s purpose during her, if I remember rightly, Australian tour, that was the limit of its service.

The mention of *The Colonel* has reconducted me into stage-land, and I may mention that since the date of its production, twenty-one years ago from the present time when I am penning these lines, *The Colonel* has never been off the stage for any very considerable spell, as Mr. Charles Collette,¹ who married Miss Blanche Wilton, a sister of Lady

¹ Mr. Charles Collette left the army—he was in the 3rd Dragoon Guards—and took to the stage professionally. He first appeared at the old Prince of Wales’s Theatre under the Bancroft management, playing in most of the Tom Robertsonian plays and in other productions. He

Bancroft's, has of late years thoroughly identified himself with the Colonel in the provinces, where, during his many tours, *The Colonel* has been his constant companion. *The Colonel* was not a success in America. I was informed that Mr. Lester Wallack, who produced it in New York, could not "touch the part," and that the American public, with whom he had been a long-established favourite, took no interest in the "æsthetic craze," as they had not appreciated the Du-Maurieresque satires in *Punch*.

And now to redeem my promise and inform my readers how it was I came to think of Messrs. Bruce and Claremont in connection with *The Colonel*. On the very night that Edgar Bruce and his partner came to me about it, Fred. Clay, the composer, a real good friend of mine, as he was of all who knew him, and more particularly of Arthur Sullivan, had been dining at our house, and had sat up in my study smoking and chatting. I was rather down on my luck in consequence of the Bancrofts having "chucked" *The Colonel*, and especially regretted it, as the piece was so *à propos* of the æsthetic craze of the moment, popularised in caricature by Mr. Punch's Du Maurier.

Fred. Clay was very sympathetic, and rolling his cigarette he observed—

"It was unfortunate, especially as Arthur Sullivan and Gilbert"—

And here he broke off.

"What!" I exclaimed. "Are *they* doing an æsthetic subject?"

But Freddy held his tongue.

married Miss Blanche Wilton, Lady Bancroft's youngest sister, whose performance as Polly Eccles (in the popular play of *Caste*) was considered second only to that of the inimitable original. Within the last few years *The Colonel* has been Mr. Collette's companion on tour, but I rather think that it is now about time for the old soldier to retire on half-pay.

"I thought so," I went on. "Of course that's their next Savoy piece."

"I didn't *say* so," expostulated Freddy.

"No, you didn't, because you didn't finish your sentence," I returned; "but it's evident."

"Well," said the faithful Fred. "I do know, and it slipped out. But I mustn't say any more, and of course it is strictly *entre nous*."

He hadn't committed himself to any definite statement, and so was not guilty of any breach of confidence. After he had gone I was simply regarding my work on *The Colonel* as so much labour thrown away, when it suddenly occurred to me that Bruce and Claremont of the Prince of Wales's Theatre had, a little time since, asked me if I had a piece, as their production was a failure. I foresaw that if the æsthetic craze were ridiculed in a Savoy opera before I could get my comedy produced, I should simply be accused of copying and trading on *their* originality. This is why I sent to Edgar Bruce and partner. If my piece got the start as a success, then the future æsthetic comic opera at the Savoy would be, as it were, the complement of the dramatic representation of the craze, *plus* dancing, music, singing, costumes, with a clever and fantastic story.

But if all these attractions came out before the simple comedy, I was afraid the critics would say that already there was "too much of the æsthetic craze about," that this piece of mine was *de trop*, that it was "inspired by the success of the Savoy æsthetic opera," and all sorts of such other pleasant things as dramatic critics have a knack of saying occasionally. However, *The Colonel* came out, and his position was firmly established some little time before Gilbert's delightfully absurd *Patience* with Sullivan's sparkling music took the town.

CHAPTER XXIII

THEATRICAL WORK—MR. PUNCH'S *POCKET-BOOK*—*THE ALMANACK*—MARK'S "PASSES"—HUMPH BARNET—ORDERS—SIR AUGUSTUS—HIS FATHER—OUR BUSINESS—RETRACING STEPS—FRANK MARSHALL—JOHN OXENFORD—A MEMORABLE EVENING—"THE NIGHT OF THE PARTY"—GEORGE ROSE

FROM the time of my first joining the staff of *Punch* up to 1881 when *The Colonel* was produced, 2nd February, while bringing out any number of pieces,—for my total reaches up to and over one hundred and fifty, mainly burlesques and some half dozen German Reed entertainments,—which might be included under the head of "operettas in one act," very carefully constructed, the requirements of the Gallery of Illustration being exceptional,—my "*Punch* work" had been going on steadily and prosperously, first under Mark Lemon, then under Shirley Brooks, who in June 1870 succeeded to the editorship. Mark used to do a fair amount of work outside *Punch*, even in the very latest years of his editorship, and his advice was eagerly sought by more than one theatrical manager besides Ben Webster of the Adelphi, between whom and Mark there was a strong bond of friendship. Mark's counsel was also sought and followed by Mr. Ingram, of the *Illustrated London News*, for which Mark used frequently to

arrange the Christmas Number, bringing into it any of the *Punch* staff who were ready and willing. In those days, "the good old times" of Mark Lemon, there was a cheery little annual called *Punch's Pocket-Book*, which lasted for some fifteen years (Sir John Tenniel is the fortunate possessor of an original set, from which only one volume is missing), and was illustrated regularly by all the *Punch* artists—Doyle, Leech, and others. In many later numbers there appear the exquisitely delightful and thoroughly original examples of Mr. Sambourne's work, perhaps some of his very best in the fanciful and grotesque line. *Punch's Pocket-Book* was decidedly a welcome Christmas present, and it had a considerable, though, as it ultimately proved, an insufficient sale. It was a costly affair, as, apart from the expenses of the illustrations above mentioned, there was a folding frontispiece, done by John Leech in colours; it was neatly bound in *morocco*, with a tab loop to fasten it; and the *honorarium*, for stories, songs, and contributions generally, was at the rate of a guinea a page, the pages being very small and well printed in perfectly clear and legible type.

"Now, gentlemen," Mark used to say to us as we sat round the table at the dinner on the penultimate Wednesday in November—"Now, gentlemen! Walk up! walk up! Stories! Songs! A guinea a page! gentlemen, a guinea a page! Be in time!"

And with this stimulus we went to work. At the short tale and epigram, Shirley Brooks was unrivalled. I think he took most of the guineas, the professor, Percival Leigh, chipping in a good second, and myself, with the other members of the staff, excepting, I think, Tom Taylor, who did not do much for the *Pocket-Book*, getting in somewhere and somehow. It was a very pleasant and gracious way on the part of Messrs. Bradbury & Evans of giving "Dr.

Mark and his merry men " a *bonus* by way of a Christmas-box. My set is incomplete, but I am lucky in possessing fourteen of these little volumes. The *Pocket-Book* was sold at half a crown, and cheap at the price in those days ; but *Punch's Almanack* gradually elbowed it out ; and portable pocket-books containing all the information that business men might require could be had at a fifth of the price, though of course these latter made no sort of attempt at lightening dry facts with any humorous and artistic fancies. Where Mr. Gradgrind rules, the best witticism is inopportune. Joking in business is *de trop*. *Punch's Almanack*, occupied entirely at one time by John Leech, and after his decease by the staff of *Punch's* artists, supplied in a measure the place of the defunct *Pocket-Book*, *minus*, of course, the dry details of "generally useful" information. Gradually the *Almanack*, which "had power to add to its number" of pages, did so, and from being a close "borough" it was, and is now, run on free trade principles, opened to all-comers of approved merit.

When I was first "on the staff," and long before I had professionally the *entrée* at all the principal theatres, Mark Lemon invariably possessed, from week to week, a perfect store of "free admissions," or "passes," to the Haymarket under Buckstone, and to the Adelphi under Webster. Mark had merely to write on a slip of paper an "order for admission," and if there happened to be an available seat anywhere in the theatre, whichever theatre it might be, Mark's sign-manual was the warrant for its holder's admission. That system has long ceased to exist, and rightly so ; for it was liable to abuse, and indeed was considerably abused by unscrupulous persons who contrived by some roundabout artful process to obtain these passes, and "for a consideration" they would hand them over to a friend. Every theatre at that time possessed a "free list," and that

acting-manager was the most considered who had the most extensive list and the showiest people on it. When Fechter appeared at the Lyceum, and, indeed, before his day, Humphrey Barnett ("Humph Barnet") was the past-master of the acting-manager's science. If the success of a piece were doubtful after the first night, "Humph,"—who was said to have had whole families in readiness awaiting his "orders," the men attired in respectable evening dress, and the ladies in rather second-rate costume, with invariably a red shawl thrown over their shoulders, serving the double purpose of hiding any defects, and of keeping them warm on their return to their (probably) suburban houses by omnibus, or when walking back to their residences within the precincts of Bloomsbury,—would send his "whips" out in every direction, and within an hour he would have "made a house." True, the *habitué* could distinguish at once the real paying public from those whom Fred. Robson used to call the "Orjers," but only the very experienced *habitué* could do this, while to the eye of the ordinary play-goer, for whom "Humph's" box-office clerk could only find a seat with considerable difficulty, the house appeared uncommonly good, and his report to his friends might be relied upon as favourable. "Humph," I believe, was an excellent servant to his manager; his hat was the shiniest I ever saw, quite memorable; and, on consideration, I should say that "Humph Barnet" was the glossiest of men, with the oiliest possible manner towards those with whom it was diplomatic to be courteous, while towards those to whose opinion and influence he was indifferent, or whom he considered as nobodies, "Humph" could be about as ill-mannered and off-hand as it is possible to conceive.

And while touching lightly on the subject of theatrical managers—and manageresses—I must stop to record some

traits of "Gus Harris," not *père* but *fils*, who became Sir Augustus Glossop Harris, and a Sheriff of the City of London, and more likely to have been elected to the chief magistracy than many an older member of the Corporation who, however useful he might have been in his own "ward," had done the State far less service than had Sir Augustus.

"Gus Harris" was an extraordinary personality. One of the kindest and most generous of men, he was also one of the fairest and sharpest in business. It was at one time rather the fashion to laugh at "Gus," but this was a great mistake. No one knew better than he did himself exactly "where the laugh came in" in his own character. He could chuckle over himself, and did keenly enjoy every step in his own successful career, from the time when he couldn't count upon having sufficient coin in his pocket to pay for a very moderate dinner. I just remember Gus Harris's father chiefly by his having played *Château-Renaud*, in the *Corsican Brothers*, to, I think, Fechter's *Louis dei Franchi* at the Princess's, when he gave to this part what he considered a thoroughly light and airy "Parisian tone," in order to differentiate it from the severer rendering it had previously received at the hands of Alfred Wigan (who was admirable in the part when he played it with Charles Kean), and from the peculiarly butcherly broad style of Walter Lacy, who had also played it with Fechter, with whom Lacy was in every respect well contrasted. But Augustus Harris *père* was no actor, though he was an excellent stage-manager, and whether at the theatre, or at the Italian Opera with which his name was so long and so honourably associated, he did his work (excellently seconded at the opera by Sir Michael Costa, *chef d'orchestre*) in a way that was at once both masterful and masterly. Like father like son; both "Gus" and "Charlie," his younger brother, were admirable stage-managers, but there was only one thing they could not do, at least for a portion of their

theatrical career ; they could not act together. However, this difficulty was got over, and for a while “Gus,” at “The Lane,” had never a better first lieutenant than Charles. Personally I liked them both ; but “Gus” was regarded by all, who knew him either in or out of business, with genuine affection ; nor can I recall in the near or in the dim and distant past, within my recollection of the theatrical world, any “past”-master so generally missed, nor one whose early removal from the scene of his exhausting labours, so many “of all sorts and conditions of men,” even up to the present time, so generally deplore.

Gus Harris, in consequence of the training his father had given him in a rough-and-tumble continental fashion, and in consequence also of coming across, in his early years, so many foreigners of various nationalities with whom his father was connected in business at the opera, could speak French fluently, German fairly, and in Italian he was “*moderate doctus*.” Probably had he been a public schoolboy, an Etonian or a Harrovian, he would have known none of these things, or have acquired only a smattering of French in later years. Like Mr. Wyndham Flitter in Albert Smith’s *Pottleton Legacy*, Sir Augustus Harris was able to say to some companion who had had what is known as “a good education,” which includes a public school and a university training—

“How many times in society have you wished that you had been taught Italian and German instead of Latin and Greek ? French you have fortunately picked up. Look at Spooner : he has been to college, and can run off the classics as I can the two-year-olds. Put us in mixed society, where there are foreigners, and see who is the muff—eh ?”

I mention one incident, that happened well within the last ten years, as an illustration of his method—apparently

want of it—of doing business. By appointment we supped together at the Lyric Club. On the table when I arrived a little late was the score of an opera and a book of words.

"Here," he said, "is just the thing for you and me. *La Demoiselle du Téléphone*. You do it in two acts (it is in three, but too long), and I'll get the company with Ada Blanche in it to go over the country, and then we'll take the first theatre that's open to us in London." Miss Ada Blanche had made herself very popular in his pantomime seasons at Drury Lane. A very clever artiste, and as a stage-manager for farcical pieces with chorus and dances she ran even "Charley 'Arris" uncommonly hard.

We talked it over, examined the book; then we arranged the terms, of which he made a note on the back of an envelope, and I on a slip of paper in my pocket-book. The subject being dismissed, he suddenly dropped off into a sound sleep; and thus, soon after midnight, I left him. I had often seen him like this. On one memorable occasion, when he was rehearsing, at night, a piece of mine at the Royalty Theatre, watching the effect from the stalls, he suddenly collapsed, and when I turned to refer to him for his opinion on some stage business, I found that he had dropped off fast asleep, with his head well down on his shirt front. When he was like this, to awaken him was useless, as, even if the object were attained, he would only rouse himself for a minute and exclaim abruptly, as if he had only been closing his eyes in order to deliberate on his decision, "That'll do. Dismiss the rehearsal. Everybody to-morrow at eleven. Sharp. Good-night." Then he would leave. His work in all sorts of ways, at the theatre, at the council, and in the City, had begun to tell on him.

In less than a year after rehearsing and starting *The Telephone Girl* in the provinces (where she has only quite

recently finished a successful career of some years), Augustus Harris died. The end came very suddenly; he was not much over forty.

His executors could find no agreement as to *The Telephone Girl*; there was only my own memorandum. Fortunately it occurred to some one to examine Gus Harris's old pocket-book, and therein was found the envelope with the terms of the agreement dated in his handwriting and signed as a *memo.* by him. But for this I might have had some considerable difficulty in proving my claim, though of course the piece itself as written and arranged by me was in evidence.

The mention of Sir Augustus and *The Telephone Girl* has rushed me forward to a date I had not intended to reach, so I will retrace my steps to the period between 1866 (*i.e.* between the production of *Ixion* and *Black Eye'd Susan* at the Royalty) and 1876, "when all the world was young."

One of the kindest-hearted, best read, and most eccentric young men within my fairly large circle of friends at this time was Frank Marshall. He was very well off, and came up to town, after a gay career at Oxford, with the curly locks of an Apollo, a taste for brilliancy in attire, evidenced by the shiniest patent leathers in constant use, and as much white waistcoat as he could carry. He was naturally of a very pale complexion, wanting in tone, but was rarely without a cheery smile, and never without a hearty word of welcome. His white waistcoat and his creamy face won for him the sobriquet, by whom bestowed Heaven only knows, of "The Boiled Ghost." He was well in with the young London of our time, though, strictly speaking (we didn't do much speaking or anything else very "strictly" in those jovial days when we were all boys

and girls together), he was my junior by some three years' worth of university terms, which, as I suppose, were the same at Oxford as with us at Cambridge. Frank Marshall plunged into the theatrical vortex; he was a bit of an author, light and serious, but, first and foremost, he was a scholarly student, and this fact won him the lasting friendship of John Oxenford, who, when he came on to *our* scene, had acted as dramatic critic of *The Times* for many years, and had sustained his early reputation for elegant scholarship. Oxenford belonged to what would now be considered an old-fashioned school of journalistic critics, whose real opinions were to be found, as were those of Mr. William Bodham Donne, in the higher class magazines and most erudite "quarterlies." John Oxenford (he must have been over fifty at this period) was a genial soul, and so was Frank Marshall, some twenty-five years his junior. No better host could John have found than Frank, nor Frank a guest more entirely to his mind. There was a certain Bohemianism about all the doings of this *coterie* of authors, literary and dramatic journalists and actors (considerably above that of the "Owl's Roost" as Robertson portrayed it in a back bar-parlour, or of the early Arundel Club, yet not quite up to the Garrick Club "form" of that time), representing as it then did a judicious admixture of various "learned" and dramatic professionals, with army men about town (as "patrons of the drama") and certain genially disposed members of the aristocracy. This was long before H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, now our Gracious King, became a member of the Garrick, having already as a young man given his exalted patronage to the A.D.C. at Cambridge.

Mais revenons à nos moutons, and the mention of *moutons* recalls the story to which the description of character given above is prefatorial.

Early in his London career, but, I fancy, just within the ten-year limit already given, Frank Marshall was *rangé*, and had an establishment of his own in Sloane Square. The place is so changed I can only identify "the spot where once lived and flourished" the eccentric Frank. To honour John Oxenford, Frank Marshall, like Hans Breitmann, "gave a barty" (Ah! and "where is dat barty now?"), and to it were asked all sorts and conditions of literary and theatrical personages. Among them was George Rose, whose bulk had increased in proportion to his fame; and his fame, as an entertainer and light-hearted biographer of *Mrs. Brown at the Play*, had increased immensely. Those who were coming to dinner had been requested to "come as they were," *chez* Frank Marshall *sans façon*. The theatrical guests whose engagements prevented them from being present at the dinner were invited to supper commencing at midnight, when "the guest of the evening," John Oxenford, was to receive an ovation, and an address in Latin was to be read to him by Frank Marshall, who, it had been arranged, was to appear in the costume of a classic Herald, while some one (to a stately actress I fancy this *rôle* was given) was to crown the recipient of these honours with laurels.

The dinner-hour was fixed for about 6.30, and more or less punctually to the hour the guests arrived. They were shown first into a narrow passage, then upstairs. Apologies were made in a hurried manner by Frank, who excused his wife from appearing at that moment in consequence of the sudden fractiousness of their infant in arms, or only recently on its legs, which would detain her in the nursery, and he "begged their kind indulgence" for himself, as he was a little behind time, and had to look after the wine and so forth.

Everyone was in a good humour; everyone expected

a first-rate entertainment, and everyone therefore graciously dispensed with the presence of the hostess and host until the pair, or either, of them could make it convenient to appear.

Now, as afterwards appeared, the truth was that, most unfortunately, the two hireling waiters had arrived quite unfit for duty. It was a very hot summer day, and they had been refreshing themselves until they didn't know potatoes from peas, lamb from lobster, pudding from *poulet*, while as to wine—well, all poor Frank's carefully arranged order of bottles, duly set out on sideboard and mantelpiece, was utterly upset, as utterly as was our host himself. He danced on the staircase in hopeless, helpless rage; he anathematised the idiots; they only grinned and protested they were all "ri"; but the climax was reached when a third disreputable-looking "help" was chased up the kitchen stairs by the cook, who had caught him secreting a couple of roast ducklings in his umbrella, with which, on some pretence or other, he was hastening to the front door, probably to deliver over his spoil to an accomplice outside! Frank could stand it no longer; this was the last straw; like Timon of Athens he would hurl these time-servers out of the house and pelt them with the dishes, sauces, and vegetables they had been doing their very best to spoil. He flew at the man who had fled from the cook with the duckling and sausages in his umbrella, wrenched this from his hand, emptied the pilfered food over his head, shouted wildly to the frightened maid-servant, who had just that moment scuttled down the passage in answer to a summons from some guest on the doorstep, to "open the door wide," which she did with an action so sudden that the visitor on the doorstep, who was none other than George Rose, panting from heat, arrayed in a splendid white waistcoat, displaying an enormous amount of shirt front, found him-

self "facing the music," and wildly greeted with a war shout of vengeance and the words, "Get out of my house, you drunken, impudent thief!" accompanied by the concussion against his portly frame of a dirty, greasy, dishevelled, crumpled-up waiter, followed by a shower of duckling, with sauce, vegetables, and one large potato, which caught poor George right on the top of his nose. The waiter, in order to save himself from falling heavily, seized on George's light alpaca overcoat, which, unable to resist the double strain of its wearer staggering back to the right and the waiter dragging it off to the left, "gave," and parted company with the remainder, thus precipitating the assailant waiter head foremost on to the outer doorstep, and leaving George Rose swinging round and gasping, but fortunately able to support himself by the iron railings at the side. Before he could recover his breath, another waiter was literally chucked out to keep his fellow company, and a bottle or two that was secreted in his pocket went smash. Then the servant-maid ran for a policeman, to whom, on his arrival, the third waiter, now in a state of innocent unconsciousness, was handed over, "with care, this side uppermost."

Poor George, with damaged face, duck-gravy-stained front and vest, was accommodated with a chair in the dining-room, while Frank, now that the first excitement was over, profuse in his regrets and apologies, carefully attended to him.

"I require re-dress," panted George, good-humouredly, "but I'm afraid nothing in your wardrobe is spacious enough for me."

However, matters were somehow arranged, and, finally, the guests amusing themselves as best they might in the interval, Frank set off in a cab to Gunter's, and within an hour a waiter, quite a model of respectability, was

able to announce the dinner. And down trooped the guests.

They were all in excellent humour; especially John Oxenford, as in order to occupy the "interval," and on the principle that nothing is so abhorrent in nature as a vacuum, or, in dramatic representation, as a "stage-wait," Mrs. Marshall had most hospitably insisted on everybody taking just a glass of champagne as a "curtain-raiser."

The result was that the evening began in an exceptionally joyous and festive manner. The long-delayed dinner got mixed up with the supper, the guests for which arrived soon after eleven, before the male portion of the diners had thought of quitting the table.

As for the speech in Latin that was to have been delivered, it could not, at the last moment (time, 1.30 a.m.), be found anywhere, and so it was "taken as read," amid the greatest possible applause. A wreath had been prepared to be placed by our host in classic fashion on John Oxenford's brow by Frank Marshall, whose aim being a trifle unsteady, the wreath slipped over Oxenford's nose and was lost under the table. Long ere the finish of the entertainment, the husbands and wives had departed, and Mrs. Frank Marshall had retired. When we left, Frank Marshall and John Oxenford were lecturing one another on the drama, both speaking together, and George Rose was telling a funny story to nobody in particular. At what hour the party broke up this deponent never ascertained. The proprietors of the drunken waiters interfered to prevent the case from getting into the police court, and compromised with Frank for the damages.

The story served George Rose for years after, and he never could tell it without shaking with laughter till the

tears rolled down his cheeks as he enacted the whole scene.

“ Did you stay till the end ? ” I asked George.

“ My dear boy,” he replied, “ I don’t think there ever was any end. At all events I never heard of it.”

CHAPTER XXIV

FROM LOWELL TO CHOATE—PHELPS—LORD
PAUNCEFOTE—SIR FRANCIS JEUNE—BISHOP
MAGEE—CANON FARRAR—SIR GEORGE
LEWIS—EDMUND YATES—DE LARA—A
DIFFICULTY—A TRIAL—A GENT—MONTAGU
WILLIAMS—TRIAL—SIR REGINALD HANSON
—OTHER TRIALS—RETRACING STEPS—
OLYMPIC

I HAVE had the pleasure of meeting all the American Ministers—who, up to the time of Mr. Bayard, were not styled "Ambassadors"—from Mr. Lowell to Mr. Choate of the present day, who, Phelps among his predecessors alone excepted, is the best after-dinner speaker for any special occasion of them all; and that is saying a good deal, since there never was sent over here from America any Minister that did not approve himself to everyone as a speaker, whether after-dinner or at a meeting with a serious purpose in view, of the very first quality.

Lowell's style was of the highly polished school, and on the occasion when I heard him he spoke fluently but without that dry quiet satiric humour that characterised the epigrams of Phelps, and he rarely showed that hearty enjoyment of his rare wit which comes so genially from Mr. Choate, and at once puts the audience on the very best of terms

with a speaker who is so evidently on the very best of terms with himself.

It was my good luck to be present at the luncheon, I am almost sure it was a lunch and not a dinner, given by the Lord Mayor, Sir George Faudel-Phillips, Bart., when Mr. Phelps, in replying to the toast of his health, made an allusion to some diplomatic or undiplomatic mistake of Lord Pauncefote's, which at the time was occupying public attention, incidentally defending Lord Pauncefote from unfair attacks. Mr. Phelps said very quietly—

"It was a mistake. True. But what of that? The man who never makes a mistake"—here he paused for a second, then added—"will never make anything."

Then he waited: and the audience suddenly seemed to awaken to the fact that they had just heard a really witty epigram, which they thereupon acclaimed with laughter and the very heartiest applause that lasted for full a minute.

I have heard this *mot* quoted over and over again as originally uttered by anyone except the person whom I heard—"with these ears"—say it, and I am convinced that it was Phelps's very own, not a quotation, but a genuine "happy thought," a real inspiration. By the way, my account of this is corroborated by Sir Francis Jeune, who was present on the same occasion, and who has no sort of doubt that this was Phelps's own original epigram, and was given for the first time on this particular occasion.

A propos of Sir Francis Jeune, it was at his house at both luncheon and at several "evenings" that I met Dr. Magee, who succeeded Dr. Jeune in the Bishopric of Peterborough, and who subsequently became Archbishop of York. His Irish stories were told with such real enjoyment of their fun and humour and with so rich a brogue that to transfer them to paper seems to be almost like taking the life out of them. Besides, they are now so well known. His telling

of the story of Dr. Whately being shown the way through the churchyard of a Protestant church by a little ragged Catholic boy, and of the lad telling him that, as a Catholic, he could believe good Protestants "might be saved on account of their inconsayvable ignorance," is too well known for me to do more than allude to it here.

I doubt, however, if in purely Irish stories Dr. Magee could quite come up to the Rev. James Healy, "Father James," of Little Bray, among whose many witticisms will be remembered the reply, now a classic, that he made to his fellow-traveller in the train, a Presbyterian who insisted on controversy, and who defied him to prove the existence of Purgatory.

"I'm content with it as it is," said Father James. "You'll only go farther and fare worse."

And here, while speaking of clergy, Protestant and Catholic, I call to mind the Rev. F. Bellew, a remarkably striking personality and, I believe, a powerful preacher, who, after considerable service in the Church of England, retired and died a good Catholic layman, and another more distinguished Anglican ecclesiastic, Archdeacon Farrar, whose acquaintance I made at the house of my uncle, Arthur Burnand, where the Archdeacon was a frequent visitor. Farrar represented the "Broad Church," and on more than one occasion his views were found to be somewhat broader than those of the Church to which he belonged. But nothing came of it. He was passed over whenever there was a bishopric vacant, for not even the great friendliness shown him by Queen Victoria could put a mitre on the head of a clergyman whose orthodoxy had been questionable. So he was made Dean of Canterbury.

He was Canon Farrar when I first made his acquaintance, and on one evening when the conversation had turned upon some ritualistic eccentricities that at a certain church

had disgusted my good uncle and aunt, who were merely ordinary go-to-church-on-Sunday people, I happened to mention a strange prayer-book which had lately been published, wherein the communion service of the Church of England was actually "fitted up" with all from the Roman Missal that could transform it into the Mass of the Catholic Church.

Canon Farrar was not acquainted with it, nor could he conceive that at that time any Ritualist could have gone to such lengths.

I asked if he would like to see it, and undertook to procure him a copy, and to have it carefully annotated, so that at a glance he could see how the service, by a curiously cunning process, was made to resemble, and yet to be slightly differentiated from, the Mass of the Catholic Church.

The book I have now in my possession, with all the notes made for me in the neatest possible handwriting by Mrs. Gilbert à Beckett, and from Canon Farrar I received a letter reprobating these underhand tactics in the strongest possible terms.

This book, which I also showed to Lord Grimthorpe as a curiosity, was printed and published in 1888 by Swan Sonnenschein & Co., and was entitled *Ceremonial of the Altar : A Guide to Low Mass according to the ancient customs of the Church of England, compiled by a Priest.*

I fancy it was suppressed.

The mention of Lady Jeune's soirées recalls to me a memorable occasion when George Lewis, now Sir George Lewis, Bart., the universally sought and exceptionally astute solicitor, was able to do me one of those "good turns which deserves another" whenever the opportunity might arise.

And *à propos* of this eminent solicitor, I remember on the occasion of a *première* at a popular theatre when the auditorium was crowded with notabilities and celebrities

of all sorts and sizes, Mr. Edmund Yates, after smilingly nodding to Sir George as the latter squeezed his way into the stalls, turned to me and said, *sotto voce*, in his jestingly cynical way—

“There goes a man who could hang one half the house and transport the other.”

“Then where would *you* be?” I asked Edmund.

“By George!” he replied, as, with an expressive wink, he jerked his head in George Lewis’s direction and chuckled with the air of self-approval that marks a man who appreciates a good thing when he says it himself.

But in order to return to Lady Jeune’s soirées and to the “memorable occasion” above alluded to, I must be permitted to make a certain “*circumbendibus*.”

Mr. Punch, who has “never set down aught in malice,” though in his earlier days, and in the public interest as he conceived it, uncommonly severe on some persons of the highest consideration, and playfully satirical with others, including the “Poet Bunn,” who in return gave Mr. Punch’s “young men” of that period a well-deserved lesson, has only once, to my knowledge, been called to account in a court of law to answer a charge of libel. In my time there were two instances, of which the first got as far as the Mansion House and stopped there; and the second was settled without the aid of judge and jury.

The story of this second case is as follows. Its hero was Mr. Isidore de Lara, the well-known composer and singer. The other characters in this farcical piece were—Mr. Percy Reeve, Mr. Harry Furniss, Mr. Guedalla, who was de Lara’s solicitor, with Sir George Lewis (at that time “George” without the “Sir”) as the *Deus ex machinâ*. It was not a bad cast for a farcical comedy with a somewhat serious interest. Mr. Percy Reeve, musical critic, versifier, and sharp article writer, was doing a short series of amusingly

satirical papers in *Punch*, in which for my part I had never detected anything of a personal character. Some imp of mischief, some idle hand from the world of practical joking, a Puck-like spirit, inspired Percy Reeve to write a poem in which he described a musician, who, to me, was simply a creature of the writer's imagination, but at the same time quite a possible character. It never occurred to my innocent mind to inquire if this was a "living picture" of any well-known original; and as a matter of fact, not frequently seeing Mr. Percy Reeve, I did not give the matter a second thought, even if I had ever given it a first one, which I doubt. Whatever imp had undertaken this business he was not at a loss for the next movement in his mischievous plan. Something in this descriptive and generally satiric poem suggested that a fanciful illustration might give the article an importance that would attract attention. I was right. The illustration settled the matter; it *did* attract attention,—too much.

So Percy Reeve's article, with an illustration by Harry Furniss, appeared. Within a very few days I had notice of an action on the part of Mr. de Lara, who considered himself libelled by this article.

I was thunderstruck. I knew Mr. Isidore de Lara by name and by reputation. I had a vague idea of having once seen him and heard him at a piano; but of this I was by no means certain; at all events, as to his personal appearance, I had but a cloudy idea of what he was like, nor did I remember ever to have come across a portrait of him. The article, to my mind, was a satirical description of an imaginary, but quite possible, person, and showed a type according to the author's idea.

Naturally my first step was to send for Percy Reeve.

"Did you mean it for de Lara?" I asked straightly.

Percy did not consider this a fair question, and parried

it with a return. "What makes you ask me that?" Then I told him.

"I don't see that I am bound to mention for whom I intended it," he objected. "Say it was for no one in particular; a *species* of a *genus*, eh?"

I explained that *that* was my idea. If he did not mean it for de Lara, could he go into the witness-box and swear to that effect?

"Um, um." He walked up and down with his "considering cap" on, "taking the floor" of my room as if he were measuring it for a new carpet.

"Supposing I did mean it for him?" he put it.

"Well if you *did* mean it for de Lara, whom personally I don't know from Adam or Tubal Cain," I replied, "then, I ask, is your article true in every particular?"

"Ah," returned Percy immediately, "'the greater the truth the greater the libel,' eh?"

"Upon my word," I said emphatically, "I can *not* see where the libel comes in. But that is not the point. If *he* thinks it a libel"—

"But I never mentioned his name," protested Reeve, "and how on earth could de Lara have ever applied it to himself, *unless it had been illustrated with a portrait of him by Furniss?*"

"What!" I exclaimed, horrified. "Was that picture by Furniss a likeness of de Lara?"

"A first-rate one," answered Reeve, chuckling—"a really first-rate one."

"*Was it!*" I observed, considerably troubled. Then I was compelled to confess my ignorance of de Lara's lineaments. As I have intimated above, I had once seen him, I think, for a few seconds, but I should not "have known him anywhere," and certainly did not recognise him in this unfortunate picture by clever Harry Furniss.

"The very spit of him," said Reeve emphatically, and still chuckling.

He professed himself ready to go into the box, and in fact to defend the action himself; but, as I pointed out to him, the action was not brought against *him*. So there the interview ended.

The next person to be interrogated was Harry Furniss. His answer was clear. He had read the article, and if de Lara was *not* intended, who on earth was it? He (Furniss) knew de Lara, of course he did, and at once he saw that, willy-nilly, any illustration that he put to the article must inevitably be de Lara. The Tricky Sprite that was playing this practical joke had certainly arranged it admirably.

"Why," I inquired of Furniss, "didn't you consult me as to the portrait?"

"First," he replied, "there wasn't any too much time; and, secondly, by your having sent the article to me I thought of course you knew all about it."

Unanswerable. There was only one course for me to pursue—"consult a solicitor." Naturally enough, I determined on at once invoking the aid of George Lewis. And full of this I put the papers in my pocket stating the whole case, and went home to dress, dine, and proceed with my wife to an "at home" at Lady Jeune's. Here, as usual, there was everybody who was anybody. Sir Francis, judge in the Admiralty and Divorce Courts,—curious legal mixture of mariners who had come to grief and of married persons having made shipwreck of their lives,—came up to me, and in his most pleasantly confidential manner admitted that he knew something of this case, and as he rather sided with the person attacked, he wanted to have a quiet chat with me on the subject. He would see me before I left, as, of course, he was assisting Lady Jeune in her reception. Evidently, from what he said, the article, coupled with the

portrait, had appeared to his legal mind "rather a nasty one." While thus cogitating, on the landing, up the stairs came lightly and cheerfully the very man I wanted to meet. At once George Lewis gave me his undivided attention in a quiet room "far from the madding crowd." I placed the papers in his hands. "Who is the attorney?" he asked.

"Guedalla," I answered. Whereat he appeared satisfied.

"Meet me to-morrow afternoon, and I'll see about it," said George Lewis; and to his own considerable personal inconvenience, as I subsequently discovered, he met me at the appointed time, and both of us called on Mr. Guedalla, in whose office I met Mr. Isidore de Lara for the first time in my life. By the way, I think that on this occasion George Lewis was not present, but that after I had had my interview with principal and attorney George appeared on the scene. It was all very friendly, as I had only to state the simple truth and admit my utter ignorance of everything except actually de Lara's name. Mr. Guedalla made no difficulties, and ultimately after he had had an interview with George Lewis alone, the latter came to me and said that for an apology in *Punch* and by my paying any costs that de Lara might have incurred, the matter would go no further. I drew up the apology, for which George Lewis obtained Mr. Guedalla's sanction; it was published, and so the matter ended.

The other case of libel was owing to an article written by one of the most invaluable of Mr. *Punch's* staff, namely, E. J. Milliken. He was, as I thought, describing an imaginary parliamentary candidate for an East End division. I forget what he called him, but his description was so true as to be remarkably unpleasant to Mr. Gent Davis, the candidate in question. So Mr. Gent Davis, M.P., brought an action, not for damages, not a civil but a criminal action, against the editor of *Punch*, who, accepting the situation and the

services of Messrs. Chester & Co., solicitors to the firm of Bradbury & Agnew, excluding the printer and publisher, nobly placed himself in the dock to be stared at by the crowd, to be shot at by hostile counsel, and to be defended, in the Lord Mayor's Court, by his old Etonian friend and dramatic collaborateur, Montagu Williams, Q.C. Montagu made a most affecting speech, alluding to his ancient comradeship, and saying all sorts of such pleasant things about me, that, had it been Damon defending Pythias or Pythias Damon, no more touching scene could have been imagined. Hearing Montagu Williams everyone present must have concluded that we had lived together all our lives, that we were absolutely inseparables, and that what injured one of us was felt equally by the other, as was the peculiarly apposite case (not cited in his pleadings) of the Twin Corsican Brothers, Louis and Fabian dei Franchi. Policemen sobbed audibly, and ushers wiped away surreptitious tears; barristers struggled with their emotion, and even the Lord Mayor of London in all his glory bent over his desk and, apparently, occupied himself in making memoranda in order to hide his feelings. Then, with an evidently stifled sigh, the Lord Mayor raised his head and beckoned to an officer of the Court, to whom he sadly handed a piece of paper. Then his Lordship sat back in his chair, casting his eyes upwards towards the ceiling in a prayerful way. Montagu Williams was finishing his great speech, and there was a murmur of applause, which was not suppressed by the Court. Montagu sat down. We wiped our eyes and breathed again. I grasped him warmly by the hand. At that supreme moment the usher solemnly approached and, just as the Lord Mayor, or the assistant clerk, was informing the public generally that the prisoner (myself) was to be bound over to take his trial at the next sessions in the Ancient Bailey, handed me a note, which I found to be from the Lord Mayor himself

to this effect—" *Will you and Montagu Williams give me the pleasure of your company at lunch directly the Court adjourns.*" Was not this a happy omen? The prisoner at the bar to be invited to breakfast by the judge on the bench!! Never was such a climax! We both accepted the well-intentioned hospitality with great pleasure. I bowed politely from the dock. "From labour to refreshment" as the Freemasons have it, and so all the principals in this Mansion House farcical yet serious drama adjourned to the Lord Mayor's dining-room, where at an excellent lunch (I sat next to the prosecutor's wife, a very charming lady) the Lord Mayor, Sir Reginald Hanson, Bart. (I forget whether he was "Barted" then or later), genially presided.

"Agree with thine adversary while he is in the way" is the advice given in Holy Writ, and this I for my part determined to do. After a brief consultation in the hall, terms of peace were finally arranged, although the prosecutor, up to the very last seemed to be keeping something up his sleeve by way of a surprise.

"I don't think you'll hear any more of it," said Montagu Williams to me as we parted at his chambers in the Temple.

Not a penny would Montagu take for his trouble and for the service he had rendered me. Messrs. Bradbury & Agnew relieved me of their solicitor's bill; Milliken settled with the firm to the satisfaction of Gent Davis. I forgot to say that in examination poor Milliken practically admitted the authorship of the article, and without withdrawing anything he had written, only regretted that his article should have been the cause of all this trouble. More than this, when the case was over, he wished to accept the responsibility for all expenses incurred. He was very much depressed and worried about it, but highly gratified that it had ended in the Lord Mayor's Court, and that the true bill was not found at the next Old Bailey sessions.

Thank my lucky stars, I have not had much experience of courts of law, whether as barrister, plaintiff, defendant, prosecutor, or prisoner at the bar. When I was compelled to bring an action against two papers, my good friend Frank Lockwood, Q.C., appeared on my behalf in court, the case being heard before Judge Huddleston, whom I knew slightly but without having the advantage of counting him as among my friends. He was not by any means favourable to me, and with ill grace assented to Frank Lockwood's pleasant proposition, made at my particular request, that I should be allowed to tell my own story to the gentlemen of the jury in my own way. This I did, and warming to my subject soon came to be on most confidential terms with my special audience of twelve, much to Frank Lockwood's delight. At all events I won both cases. From one I received a cheque which left me a trifle in pocket, a sort of fee for my speech, and from the other not a single sixpence, and never heard of him, whoever he was, nor of his paper, whatever it might have been, from that day to this, and never want to. In fact, until I began jotting down these notes the whole matter had gone clean out of my memory, and even now I can only call to mind the "scene in court," Lockwood's cheeriness, Huddleston's sourness, the jury's attentiveness, but have only the vaguest recollection of what it was all about.

"Why that I cannot tell, said he,
But 'twas a famous victory."

There was one other occasion when I figured as a witness. Charles Wyndham brought an action against somebody or other for something or other, what it was I have not now the remotest idea even if I ever did know anything about it—which I doubt—and I, much against my wish, was subpoenaed. I explained to the solicitor that my evidence could be of no possible value, but as he considered

himself (although a solicitor) a better judge of this matter than I could possibly be (he forgot I was a barrister in no practice), I consented, in consideration of being paid my two guineas down, to appear for Charles Wyndham's "special benefit." When I arrived in court I saw Wyndham and his son-in-law, who, as I discovered, was the barrister conducting the case for him. I found that I knew everybody on both sides of the question, and so passed from one set to the other chatting with the most judicial fairness. Mr. Justice Day was the judge, the pleasure of whose acquaintance I had enjoyed for some years. When my name was called, I responded, and just as I was about to kiss the book, Mr. Justice Day asked drily, "What is *he* to prove?"

"I don't know, my lord," was my prompt response, cheerfully given.

Wyndham's son-in-law (more "in law" now than ever) rose to explain.

Mr. Justice Day saw nothing in the explanation. However, as it appeared to be the wish of all parties that I should be given a chance, I was sworn, and at once questioned by an elderly Q.C., who happened to be the only person in the case with whom I was not more or less personally acquainted. He asked *me* a question, and before I could answer it, Mr. Justice Day asked *him* another, which was simply,

"What's that got to do with it?"

The elderly Q.C. began to show cause, but Judge Day proved to him in a couple of seconds that, as a matter of fact and of law, my evidence (no disparagement to my veracity of course being implied) was not worth a small "d" which stands for a penny, and was therefore not by any means good value for the fee I had received.

"Exactly so, my lord," said I pleasantly, corroborating the judge, who drily ordered me to stand down, which I

did with most cheerful alacrity, and left the court "without a stain on my character." What it was all about I absolutely don't remember. Perhaps Sir Charles Wyndham also has forgotten it, although at the moment I fancy he was rather disappointed at the collapse of one of his supposed leading *dramatis personæ* in his legal light comedy.

The atmosphere of a court of law "I never could abide," as Mrs. Brown used to say. To remain in any one of them, with or without a wig, always gave me a headache, and consequently even of those *causes célèbres* whereat I have been present as a spectator, such, for example, as the great Tichborne trial, some theatrical cases, and some others of peculiar interest, I never could remain for more than three or four hours at a stretch, and that amount didn't suit me for two days running. The great "*Times* versus Fenian Conspiracy" case I heard, that is I "part heard" it, when Lord Russell, then Sir Charles Russell, was at his very best and came off victorious; and I was present during some of the acts of the strange "jewel case" drama, the scene of which was laid in the very house in the Boltons that I have now occupied for some years. Then Sir Charles was moved to tears; he had been imposed upon by his own client, and handsomely, frankly, and freely withdrew any aspersions that, by his line of examination which he had been as a duty compelled to adopt, he might have thrown on the fair fame of the chief witness, a lady who had been one of his unhappy but remarkably clever client's dearest friends. I give no names, as I am recalling only these traits in Charles Russell's character as a fearless advocate and a thorough gentleman. He could speak plainly when he liked, and when he considered plain speaking necessary. Herein he much resembled the third editor of *Punch*, who, although a man of good breeding, courteous

as a Fellow of a college should be, and an elegant scholar, when stage-managing his own dramas, could be as unpleasantly emphatic as, according to theatrical legends, was the great Ducrow of Astley's Amphitheatre (long, long before my time), or as Macready when carried away by the excitement of the situation; though no one of these was up to the high-water mark of E. T. Smith, who used dams enough to obstruct anything like a flow of language (and his was strong, peculiar, and original), nor "in it" with John Ryder, a fine actor of "the old Macready school."

"Had a good rehearsal to-day, Tom?" one would inquire of Taylor.

"Yes," he would reply, "not bad."

"Ah, you *can* drill 'em," observed his friend, who was probably one of the cricketing amateur actors calling themselves the "Old Stagers" of Canterbury.

"Well," quoth Tom, plucking at his beard, a habit he had when talking earnestly; and this was a subject on which he always talked earnestly, being intensely devoted to the drama—specially to his own—"well you see, *I* am not harsh with them. I know what I want and what they ought to do. And if anyone doesn't understand—and they are, some of 'em, absurdly dense—I carefully explain, and we go over and over it again."

"I should like to be present at one of your rehearsals, Tom."

He was flattered, and took his amateur friend to the Olympic.

Tom rehearsed, Manager Emden occasionally suggesting, but leaving the conduct of affairs mainly to Tom.

The friend, as spectator, was much amused. Up to a certain point Tom was excellent; his directions clear, and his manner pleasant. But as the rehearsal went on, Tom quite forgetting his "friend in front" and losing himself

in his energetic stage management, began to thunder and to scare everybody.

There was one man, a "super," who would not, or could not, comprehend the instructions given him *vivà voce* by the author. When Tom had acted the part for him (much to the amusement of the professionals, *cela va sans dire*), the unfortunate "super" failed to reproduce the idea. Tom might bear with him for seven times, but to seventy times seven, or anything approaching that total, he could not attain.

Tom mastered himself with great efforts, but almost danced with rage at the man's impenetrable stupidity. At last he turned to Emden and said, "with," what the stage directions in grand opera describe as "suppressed fury," "I'll just speak quietly to that man," and thereupon he went up the stage and took the offender gently by the buttonhole in order to arrest his attention. The man was immensely flattered at being singled out for this special mark of courtesy, and became at once "all ears,"—precious long ones, poor chap! Then Tom, still in a state of "suppressed fury" as aforesaid, glared at him from under his bushy eyebrows, and agitating his iron-grey locks straight in front of the flattered "super's" placid countenance, whispered—stage-whispered—severely and emphatically under his very nose—

"My dear sir"—as if he were commencing a polite letter to an utter stranger—"My dear sir, *you're a damned fool.*"

Only this and nothing more.

Then Tom returned to his seat intending to resume rehearsal. The "super" was utterly dumbfounded. Everybody was.

There was a low murmur just such as the stage-manager of the "Meiningen Troupe" would like to hear from his

"crowd" as indicating a rising of the people in the Roman Forum. It increased. Emden knew what it implied.

The rehearsal was momentarily interrupted. Tom was the only unconcerned person on the stage. He had let off his steam and was now quite cool, calm, collected, and absolutely unaware of having given any offence. But Emden plainly told him; and then Tom, who, in effect, was the kindest-hearted creature, went up again to the man, addressed him as a "fellow-artist," and apologised most handsomely to him, and not only to him, but to all the ladies and gentlemen present, specially the ladies, for having been led away by the excitement of the moment. Then all, being much amused, made merry, the ruffled dignity of the injured "super" was smoothed, and the rehearsal went on better than ever, after Tom had addressed them all with one of his favourite phrases, as he heartily rubbed his hands together—

"Now, my lambs, let's get to work again!"

And so "the incident closed."

CHAPTER XXV

THE À BECKETTS—WYBROW ROBERTSON—
MATT MORGAN—A CHARITY SHOW—*THE
TOMAHAWK*—CELEBRATED CARTOON—TOM
TAYLOR—DIFFICULTIES—BENNETT—BENE-
FIT—YATES—SHIRLEY BROOKS—GEORGE
SALA—SELF-BURLESQUE—THE BEEFSTEAK
—PELLEGRINI—THE ST. JAMES'S CLUB—
THE WELLINGTON—SOYER'S SYMPOSIUM
—THE COCK—THE COSMOPOLITAN—THE
SKIRROWS—CHARLES LAMB KENNEY—
JIMMY DAVISON—ARABELLA GODDARD—
CLAY—COWEN—SULLIVAN—JOHN OXEN-
FORD

I FANCY it was before I was on *Punch's* staff, or at all events very soon after my election to a seat at Mr. Punch's Board, that I made the acquaintance of Arthur à Beckett and of his brothers "Gil" and "Cooky" or "Coco," for I never have learnt exactly which is the correct card, nor have I ever ascertained why he obtained a name which most certainly could not have been bestowed on him by his godfather and godmother at his baptism. Gilbert was the eldest of the three, of a most kindly and gentle disposition, with a cynical turn of wit—most eccentric in his humour, therein resembling his father, author of the *Comic Histories*, who came on to the staff of *Punch* soon

after it was first started, and remained there, except for a temporary absence, until his death; Arthur the youngest. Gil and Arthur were always getting themselves mixed up with some journalistic venture or other, which, as a rule, had a brilliant but a shortlived career. Arthur was with me when I edited, for a while, the *Glow-worm*, an evening paper owned by Wybrow Robertson with at first a board of directors, but subsequently by Wybrow Robertson alone. Wybrow was very amusing, cynical, and inclined to be reckless. I made his acquaintance when the Hospital for Incurables wanted a *fête* got up for its benefit, and the à Becketts, Wybrow, Matt Morgan, at that time cartoonist on *Fun*, "Tommy" Bowles, Frank Marshall, and others, did their very best to secure a bumper for that excellent charity.

The *fête* was given in the old Exhibition Buildings, and we organised a Richardson's show, a circus, and some other entertainments. The circus was especially absurd, the enjoyment of its peculiar humour being mainly restricted to those who took part in it. The public paid their money, and we, the performers, did the rest. We paraded the building at intervals, beat drums, made speeches, and invited everybody generally to "walk up and see the show." It was a rough-and-tumble and more or less an improvised affair, but it brought in over one hundred and fifty pounds, and obtained for me the privilege of a certain number of votes for the admission of candidates, which I possess to this day. The only thing I can recall about it is that during a piece called *The Siege of Seringapatam* (which was played in about five minutes), Matt Morgan, as a comic soldier, thought that to jump into a big drum and conceal himself would be an immensely humorous proceeding, while it occurred to the other actors on the stage, with him at the moment, that to belabour the sides of the drum with the butt-end of their muskets would be equally humorous.

Poor Matt! He couldn't release himself; he shrieked out to his assailants to stop, but amid the banging of cymbals, the clash of swords, the explosion of "mines," and the blowing up of the fortress, his cries were unheeded. Had it not been that between his jumping into the empty drum and the fall of the curtain there was but the space of a minute, the unfortunate Matt would have ended his comic performances more dead than alive. As it was, the drum was overturned, and he was emptied out bruised, battered, and swearing like a trooper, which was the very character he happened to be enacting.

When Matt Morgan undertook the cartoons in *Fun* without, as far as I am aware, the slightest experience of such work, he used coolly to take Tenniel's cartoons and literally trace such likenesses as he required of public characters from them. This he showed me himself, and called it "founding himself on Tenniel." The result, however, was but so-so, and it was only in later years when Matt Morgan joined Arthur à Beckett's staff on *The Tomahawk*, consisting mainly of the à Becketts, Gilbert, Arthur, and occasionally Albert, Frank Marshall, Thomas Gibson Bowles, T. Escott, and one or two others, that he came out as an original but very unequal draughtsman. *The Tomahawk* did daring things, the most daring of all being a big cartoon of an empty chair, showing the throne vacant at a time when Her Majesty Queen Victoria, still mourning for Prince Albert the Good, had not yet felt herself equal to appearing once again among her people and brightening London with her gracious presence. It was an unprovoked attack, and conceived in the worst possible taste. This cartoon helped to accelerate the end of *The Tomahawk*. During its existence it had contrived to get itself disliked by more than one person in a position to have been friendly, and who would have lent a helping hand to the à Beckett Brothers in their

journalistic career. Among these was Tom Taylor, most good-natured of men, though mighty obstinate and not ordinarily ready to forgive and forget. The obnoxious cartoon was just one of the obstacles which stood in the way of Arthur à Beckett's being admitted as even an outside contributor to *Punch*. Besides, Tom Taylor had been attacked in *The Tomahawk*, and having been a personal friend, as well as *collaborateur* on *Punch*, of the father of these young men (namely, Gilbert Abbott à Beckett, magistrate, writer on *The Times*, editor of a satirical paper, *The Age*, I think, author of some of the best things in *Punch*, and dramatist), he felt the attack, and naturally did not care about assisting, or still less meeting, either of the à Beckett Brothers, who at an earlier time, I fancy, had been to a certain extent his *protégés*. Mark Lemon, also, for some reason, of which I have never mastered the details, had declined to have anything to say to the sons of his old friend and *collaborateur*. However, when Arthur showed a talent for sharp writing, combined with a keen appreciation of humour, and when he suggested to me that I might back him up in his application for work on *Punch* to Tom Taylor, I did so with pleasure; and when Tom, in a conversation with me, had stated his reasons for being disinclined to "take on" either of the à Becketts, he, at my request, yielded so far as to receive contributions from either of them; and after a while both Gil (the eldest of the three) and Arthur (the youngest) were invited to occupy two of "the seats of the mighty" at "The Round Table." Arthur came on during Tom Taylor's editorship, but I think that Gil did not join "the table" until later. Of this, however, I am not quite sure. Poor Gil did excellent work, and died early. To Gil à Beckett's suggestion was entirely, solely, and only due Tenniel's immortal cartoon of "Dropping the Pilot," when the youthful Emperor of Germany accepted the resig-

nation of his father's adviser, Prince Bismarck. I do not remember any other instance of the suggested subject for the cartoon being at once unanimously accepted without argument, contradiction, or discussion. Its applicability, its power, pathos, and simplicity struck everybody at once. It was an inspiration; there was a pause; and then "that's the cartoon" was, *unâ voce*, the verdict of us all. Gil à Beckett's burlesque advertisements were inimitable. No one has succeeded him in this particular line of humour.

When I first knew Arthur à Beckett, he was a handsome youth with curly hair, always bright, and ready to take part in any nonsense that might occur to the light-hearted company in which he found himself. I rather fancy Douglas Straight, afterwards barrister, Indian Judge, and Sir Douglas to boot, young Buckstone, and "Jimmy" Ferguson (Sir James), were of this company. James Molloy the composer came into it later. Tom Archer, as a thoroughly experienced journalist, generally spoken of as "Old Tom," Clement Scott, then working his way into *Daily Telegraphian* criticism, and other Bohemians, were occasionally associated with us in some of our amusements, though all the journalists whose acquaintance I made at that period still clung to the sanded floor and long clays of Bohemianisms, which soon came to be considered as an affectation. We formed a little coterie just betwixt and between the thorough Bohemians of the Arundel Club and the superior order of dramatic authors, actors, and theatrical members of the Garrick. There were two others on the scene with us, Escott, afterwards invaluable to Edmund Yates on *The World*; and Frank Marshall, of whom I have already spoken, who was quite a millionaire among us, as we, if any of us possessed any private means at all, were mainly living on what we could earn by brains and pens. Wybrow Robertson, who married first Miss Milner Gibson, and after her decease Miss Lytton, was also "*de*

nous," though in age and experience he was many years the senior of the oldest of us.

It was a great pleasure to me, when I had determined to re-establish *Punch* in Parliament, to find Henry William Lucy ready and, like Barkis, "willin'" to undertake the work. Not even Shirley Brooks, who had been "in the gallery," was so completely in touch with "The House" as our "Toby, M.P. for Barks." And he has been peculiarly lucky in the two artists, Furniss, and after him E. T. Reed, who joined Henry Lucy in his work, sometimes illustrating his text, sometimes drawing according to the artist's own sweet will, fancy free, and unfettered by Toby or by editor. Harry Furniss was at his very best with Toby for some years, and when he quitted *Punch*, for reasons best understood and appreciated by himself, his place was at once filled by Mr. Reed, who has firmly established himself as *Punch's* parliamentary artist, with only one formidable rival, namely, the inventor and delineator of *Prehistoric Peeps*.

Bennett, in Shirley Brooks' time, was an eccentric genius, and his artistic work is chiefly remarkable for its curiously grotesque humour. He was a middle-aged man when he joined *Punch*, and at various times of his career had been associated with illustrated papers whose *raison d'être* had been antagonism to *Punch*. He was a very quiet man, with a somewhat sad expression of countenance and long black hair, that suggested his being a professional musician, a flute-player for choice perhaps. He spoke, as he laughed, softly. He was a victim of a fixed idea that he was a hopeless invalid, and would die at a certain time. Doctors told him he was quite sound, and that if only he would move to higher ground and live in bracing air, he would be set up for a fairly long life. No, he wouldn't believe it. Once walking away with him at night, after the dinner, he confided this belief to me. He wouldn't change

his residence. It was difficult to realise that he was in earnest on the subject, but he undoubtedly was, and as he had foretold, so it happened. We on the *Punch* staff got up a first-rate benefit for his widow and children, playing at the Adelphi, where *Cox and Box*, libretto'd by myself from Maddison Morton's farce, and set to music by Arthur Sullivan, was done in public for the first time, and at Knowles's T.R., Manchester, for the Bennett Benefit Fund.

Recent mention of the à Becketts reminds me of Edmund Yates who, in *The World*, was at one time constantly sneering at Arthur à Beckett under the title of "The O' Bucket"; but why Edmund was angry with him and how it came about that he, who was so peculiarly alive to all that was humorous and witty, could ever have considered that to convert "à Beckett" into "the O' Bucket," was either humorous or witty, has always been a puzzle to me. It is likely enough that the cause of their quarrel was of no interest to anyone except their two selves, and, after a while, not much even to them.

A *propos* of quarrels of journalists, Shirley Brooks and George Augustus Sala, after having been friends, and occasionally boon companions, for years, suddenly developed a deadly enmity towards each other. Whether George had been the aggressor or not this deponent cannot say, but well does he remember Shirley's article in *Punch* and the little sketch, unsigned I think, which pointed the application. Sala had been friendly, professionally, towards *Punch*, but after this he confounded Shirley with the paper, and used to do more than "confound" them both. George Augustus was neutral throughout Tom Taylor's editorship, during which time I had come to know George and to like him much. At one time I had considered that his never having been invited to become a member of the staff, that is one of Mr. Punch's privy councillors at the round table,

had been a distinct loss to Mr. Punch; but this opinion became gradually modified on finding how very much on their guard all George Sala's best friends had to be in their intercourse with him, in order to avoid giving him the slightest ground for offence. As a contributor, occasional or regular, and humoured to the full, he was excellent; but as one of the council, at any time, but especially during the autocratic rule of Tom Taylor, I have no hesitation in saying Sala would have been absolutely impossible. The best work he ever did for *Punch* was a paper admirably burlesquing his own style when he was writing two or three columns of gossip weekly in the *Illustrated London News*. He was in himself a fund of information on all sorts of in-the-way and out-of-the-way matters. He was a walking storehouse of useful and useless knowledge; though none of it to him was useless, as there was not one item in his folios of reference that he could not turn to account, no subject on which he could not have written a most readable, entertaining, and instructive article. The article above alluded to appeared in *Punch*, within, if I remember aright, the first year of my editorship, and it caused many of my friends to shake their heads on seeing me and ask, "My dear fellow, isn't it rather a mistake of yours to attack Sala in *Punch*?"

I admitted that it was. I became very serious.

"Are you and Sala friends?" would be the inquiry.

And my reply invariably was to the effect that we were on the best possible terms, and those who happened to see us pleasantly supping together on a Friday night at the Beefsteak Club after our work was done, prophesied that that fraternal bond would soon be broken. No one ever suspected Sala of being himself the author of the article in *Punch* that burlesqued his own style and manner, and both of us perceived that there was some fun to be got out

of our keeping our own counsel. Neither on *Punch*, nor off it at the time, had anyone the slightest suspicion of the truth. One evening, at the Beefsteak Club, the subject having been somehow lugged on to the *tapis*, George requested me politely to name the writer.

"No," I replied, with equal politeness, "I cannot do that without his permission."

"It is a personal attack on me," began George, waxing wroth.

Our *convives* were more or less of my opinion, the more sensible and peacemaking of our friends hastening to point out that the literary style of any well-known and distinguished writer, such as Thackeray had been and George Sala was at that time, was decidedly fair game for the professional jester.

"I join issue," answered Sala, his eyes twinkling and almost betraying his secret by his evident appreciation of the humour of the situation. "I contend that the article is offensive personally, that it deals with matters no writer—no friendly writer—has any excuse for touching upon, and that Burnand as my personal friend, and as editor, ought to have rejected it."

"I don't reject an article that I think extremely clever and brilliant," I said, "especially if, in my judgment, it does no harm to anyone and causes amusement to everyone conversant with the work of the author who is travestied."

"When I was younger," replied George, becoming more and more excited, "I would have pulled the nose of the man who I considered had attacked me." Here our friends laughed nervously, fearing that unpleasant developments were about to disturb the harmony of the club.

"As to nose-pulling," I returned, facing him and regarding George steadily, "it is all very well to talk in that manner,

and if as editor I accept the responsibility of the publication of that article, your threat applies to me."

At this point (of the nose) one peacemaker interfered, and said the matter had gone quite far enough, and the subject had better be dropped. After all, whom did it concern? was it a matter worth quarrelling about?

"Personally," I replied, quietly but firmly, "I do not think this or any matter in journalism is worth a duel to the death, nor would I shed one drop of ink over it. But," looking across at George, who was with difficulty repressing his laughter, "if Sala really wishes to carry out his threat he can easily take the affair entirely into his own hands."

"I can," exclaimed George, rising up excitedly, "and I will!"

Everyone jumped to their feet. It seemed as though he were going to assault me there and then! What was their surprise at seeing George, first with one hand, then with the other, *wring his own nose*, and, murmuring humbly, "I apologise," drop down abashed into his seat. They all stared. George burst into one of his shoulder-shaking fits of laughter. All were puzzled, and looked from one to the other for enlightenment.

"At my request," I explained, "George wrote that article himself."

"So you've been selling us all this time!" quoth Edmund Craigie, our excellent raconteur, artistic gourmet, and genial president at our Friday night's suppers. George and myself apologised to everybody, and drank to their very good health collectively.

Those Beefsteak Nights are among my very pleasantest club recollections. Thither used to come Dick *alias* "Corney Grain," after his musical entertainment, what time the German Reeds were "going strong," and Dick Grain had thoroughly established his unique reputation as a worthy

successor of John Parry. There, too, was Arthur Blunt, "Arthur Cecil" on the stage, arriving as a rule about a quarter before midnight at the Old Beefsteak Club (then in King William Street, Charing Cross, next door to what was then Toole's Theatre), and quite the last, with his friend Dick, to leave.

That fine eccentric caricaturist and colourist, Carlo Pellegrini, was a regular attendant and a most amusing companion, his peculiar expressions and his limited knowledge of the best English "as she is spoke," marking him out as a "character" whose kindliness and geniality endeared him to all of us. "Ah, my good fellow, I tell you," was the preface with which he would introduce his anecdotes, which, not being remarkable for subtlety of humour, would certainly have lost all the point they possessed had they been told by anyone else than Carlo Pellegrini, "The Pelican," in his own inimitable style. The *Restaurateur* now widely known as "Pagani's," when it was a little confectioner's where the artists round and about that *Quartier* could get a good and inexpensive lunch, owed its first start into popularity mainly to Pellegrini; and the worthy proprietor was so grateful that when the poor "Pelican" died, rich in little else than the fame of his work and the possession in his bureau of some odds and ends with many pawn-tickets, and deep in Pagani's debt, the grateful creditor, remembering that so much of his success was due to Pellegrini, cancelled the debt, and made no claim on such estate as was left. I could mention others who were equally generous. As a Bohemian Pellegrini began, as a Bohemian he ended; and the greatest kindnesses towards the close of his short life were shown to him by such good-hearted Bohemians as had had the grace to be less careless, less improvident, than the poor "Pelican." It was a sad finish to what might have been a brilliant career.

The incidental mention of "The Beefsteak" reminds me of the various pleasant clubs of which I have been a member, and among them notably was the St. James's. I am speaking of the St. James's when it was situated in St. James's Street. It occupied part of the block that had originally been "Crockford's," and later "The Wellington." This last was a dining place on a large scale, and was first opened in "the Great Exhibition year." Whether it was run as a rival to "Soyer's" at Gore House, known as "The Symposium," or whether it was under the same management, I do not remember; all I know is that, within my recollection, these two restaurants were the first of the good dining places with a set *menu* consisting of soup, fish, joint, *entrée*, served in the best style at separate tables, and at what would be now termed "popular prices." Hitherto the only "restaurant" I had ever heard of as worthy to be classed with the "*Restaurations*" in Paris, was Verrey's in Regent Street, and that, by reason of the prices, was exclusive. The coffee-rooms of some of the hotels, such as Long's in Bond Street, were very dear, and that of the Piazza in Covent Garden, which was rather more reasonable, had been hitherto mainly patronised by *habitués* and by those who wanted *recherché* dinners away from home; while, ordinarily, City men affected "chop-houses," like "The Cock" at Temple Bar and similar establishments, where the meat and cooking was excellent, and where, as a rule, the draught stout (in pewters), the old Madeira, and the port wine (in pints) were no mean attractions. I can just remember seeing the old "Cock coinage," or, strictly speaking, "tokens"; but I think its limited currency had ceased long before my time. It was not a bad idea for securing and encouraging custom, as the metal counters, stamped with the "Cock" die, would not pass anywhere except at the Cock itself. Say your bill for lunch was three shillings

and fourpence, then whether you handed in payment three and sixpence or four shillings, you received the change in "Cock tokens." The waiter would take his gratuity in this special form, and if the customer came away with any of it in his possession it was useless to him, or to anyone, anywhere except at the Cock, where it would serve as payment, wholly or in part, for lunch or dinner. This coinage of "tokens" was made illegal and so long ago ceased.

There was, and there may be now for aught I know, though I have not seen its name in any recent lists of clubs, a very exclusive literary, artistic, and parliamentary club called "The Cosmopolitan," which consisted of a suite of apartments on the first floor of one of the big houses in a corner of either Berkeley or Grosvenor Squares. My first visit there was made in company with Tom Taylor, with whom I was walking towards my home, in Brompton, after a *Punch* dinner. He put me down in the club book as a candidate, and after some time I was elected, but rarely visited it, owing to its only being open during the session, and then, if I remember aright, only at night. After paying the entrance fee and subscription, a member was entitled to "free drinks," consisting of tea, coffee, brandy, whisky and soda. It was a superior sort of free-and-easy, where pipes could be smoked, and where men dropped in from soirées or dinner parties or from the House, and, like King Artaxominous,

"Smoked and drank, then drank and smoked again,"

until the small hours began to grow bigger by degrees. Here I well remember meeting Robert Browning, and having a long talk with Anthony Trollope, who, bearded and rough in manner, struck me as being a rough variation of the Tom Taylor type. Here too I met George Cavendish Bentinck (M.P. and one of the proprietors of the Olympic Theatre

at that period), who was very *lié* with Tom Taylor ; and I rather fancy that Captain Stracey, well known in theatrical circles, and most of the elder Canterbury Pilgrims (I mean the members of the *corps dramatique* of amateurs styling themselves "The Old Stagers") were among the regular frequenters of this upper Bohemian club. Of course some notabilities whom I there encountered may have been merely casual visitors. I suppose that one of this Club's attractions was that here the pipe could be smoked in peace ; for in those days pipes were not allowed in clubs, nor do I think that at that date every club was provided with a comfortable smoking-room ; certainly not with such smoking-rooms as now exist, where conversationalists forgather, and where

" The pipe with solemn interposing puff
Makes half a sentence at a time enough."

Even in the Garrick smoking-room in the old Garrick Club, I doubt whether at the period of which I speak the pipe was tolerated.

The mention of " people whom I have met " (as N. P. Willis entitled his amusing book of gossip) at the Cosmopolitan reminds me of the occasions when, with Browning, Edmund Yates, George Sala, Arthur Cecil Blunt, the admirable Mrs. Jarrett, and Evelyn Wood (before he was General Sir Evelyn), I dined at the house of the most hospitable Skirrows. Mr. Skirrow, a tall elderly man with a convivial-looking face and a nose that accommodated itself to any amount of snuff, was, I think, " Master Skirrow," one of the taxing-masters in Chancery, an excellent host, as Mrs. Skirrow was a most estimable hostess. Among such *convives* as those above mentioned, the poet Browning was comparatively silent, while George Sala and Edmund Yates were the amusing conversationalists. Browning was about the last man whom anyone, meeting him for the first time, would have

taken for a poet. It is expected, generally, of a poet that he should be of somewhat eccentric appearance. He should be above the prevailing fashion in dress, and wear a costume entirely of his own creation and the tailor's make. Now there was nothing about Browning of the Tennysonian ruggedness. He was in every way "neat but not gaudy"; faultlessly dressed, and if there is one epithet above another that could be chosen to exactly describe him it would be the adjective "smug." George Sala would on occasion be effusively courteous in an old-world style. I remember his going down on one knee to kiss the hand of queenly Mrs. Jarrett as he bade her good-night. But George Augustus when with ladies was always the very quintessence of courtliness. The decease of that amiable couple "The Skirrows" left a blank in a certain semi-literary society which may, since then, have been adequately filled, but not within my personal experience.

Living near us when we were in Russell Square was James Davison, then the well-known musical critic of *The Times*, whom I remember meeting for the first time in company with Charles Lamb Kenney, who introduced us.

To Charles Lamb Kenney I was attached by his *prénoms*. Always a student of the delightful old-world writings of Charles Lamb, I had looked for some resemblance to him in C. L. Kenney. Except that Kenney was quiet and observant, I should say there was no sort of likeness between them. Charles Lamb Kenney's name did a great deal for him, I am sure; he never did much for himself. I remember hearing that he was associated with Albert Smith and another author (I am not sure whether it was not Tom Taylor at his earliest) in an extravaganza that the Keeleys produced at the Haymarket. Two of the *collaborateurs* did all the work, and Kenney was not one of them. Kenney's contribution (I remember Montagu

Williams as my authority for this, and he had it from the Keeleys, who played in the piece; and I think it was produced at the Haymarket under their management) consisted of a single couplet, which was the very best in the piece. It is annoying not to be able to recall the two lines, but I can quite credit the story, as Kenney was, occasionally, epigrammatically brilliant and invariably, because constitutionally, lazy. In the latter part of his life James Davison, above mentioned, found him congenial work in his *Musical Times* (or *Musical World*, I cannot quite fix the name of Jimmy Davison's paper), to which C. L. Kenney was a spasmodic contributor.

Jimmy, that is James, Davison was an extraordinary person. Thackeray's description of Father Prout (Frank Mahony), when he last saw him in Paris, would pretty well apply to the eccentric "J. D." He was snuffy, untidy, dirty, unkempt, brilliant as a musical critic, clever "all round," a master of his pen, and as kindly to those to whom he wished to be kindly as he was nasty towards those whom he personally, or professionally, disliked. He had a fund of anecdote about illustrious musicians, composers, singers, and literary men chiefly connected with the press, which he would dole out during dinner until the patience of his auditors would be exhausted, and they would begin to anathematise the day and hour when their evil genius had prompted them to invite Jimmy to dine with them. It is difficult for me to call to mind any such bore as was James Davison at table. And he used to begin so well! He had *auctoritas* to back him, and where all were youngsters, or comparatively so as far as he was concerned, the party would, at the commencement of the dinner, hang on his lips, so to speak. But what *did*, literally, "hang on his lips" was the soup, and though we dallied with our plates, and the host and hostess made a feint of continuing the course, yet to keep

up the farce for over twenty-five minutes was impossible ; so after they had apologised, by saying that " if Mr. Davison didn't mind, we would go on with the next course," to which he would, quite casually, reply, " Don't wait for *me*," and straightway commence his seventh anecdote which the question had brought to his memory, the dinner proceeded. By the time we had arrived at the coffee Jimmy Davison would be messing with the *pièce de résistance*. Several times I dined in his company, and once only he dined with me at my house in Russell Square. When he had departed, my wife and I joined in a duet of " Never again." He liked to encourage the young composers of that time, Arthur Sullivan, Fred. Clay, and Fred. Cowen, and did many a good turn to those who needed one. Remembering Arabella Goddard (whom I saw and heard play at my father's house when I was about sixteen), I could then quite understand how difficult so clever and so charming a lady, as she appeared to be, found her married life coupled to this thorough Bohemian. No wonder they were separated, for, except the " den " of the late Charles Keene, the eccentric *Punch* artist, unequalled black-and-white draughtsman, and the " study " of old Professor Leigh, I never in my life set foot in such a higgledy-piggledy house, or rather such higgledy-piggledy apartments in any house as those in which I used to find Jimmy Davison in the *quartier* Bloomsbury. Where his personal likes and dislikes were not concerned, his criticisms were reliable ; but where there was a bias, then to read between his lines was an absolute necessity in order to get at anything like the truth. Yet for all this he was ever a highly laudatory critic of Arabella Goddard's performances, and, though the separation was inevitable, Jimmy would write always, and speak occasionally, in terms of the highest praise of her, professionally. He was followed in his office by Dr. Hueffer, a clever man,

and a most scholarly musician ; yet he also, as a critic, was undoubtedly prejudiced. As far as I remember, he but grudgingly admitted the peculiar gift of Arthur Sullivan as composer of light comic opera ; but this was, I fancy, through a feeling of annoyance with him for not devoting his talents entirely to serious work. Both Jimmy Davison and his contemporary dramatic critic in *The Times*, John Oxenford, had one habit in common, and that was of having their private box filled with friends and toadies, and of talking so loud as, not infrequently, to irritate an attentive audience into hushing them down.

CHAPTER XXVI

SOTHERN'S *DUNDREARY*—CATCH PHRASES— BISHOP COLENZO—THEOLOGICAL PAMPHLET —EXTRACTS

ONE man in his time plays many parts, and if that man happens to be a "ready writer," and an impulsive thinker, he, at various odd moments, pens and publishes a lot of stuff that the world would willingly let die, however heartily at the moment they may have applauded the success. Here is an instance in point. At one time between 1861 and 1862 (I being twenty-five years of age and, of course, wise at that) there was a great stir in the learned theological department of the English Church about the works of Dr. Colenso, Bishop of Natal, who had not a little scandalised his co-religionists by the publication of his "views" on the Pentateuch. These views were, it was at that time considered, dreadfully unorthodox. There was great fluttering in the Anglican dovecots. Now it so happened that at this period Sothern as *Lord Dundreary* at the Haymarket, in Tom Taylor's play called *Our American Cousin*, was at the height of his popularity. Lord Dundreary pervaded society; he was quoted in papers; he was imitated in conversation. In fact, not since the great comedian Liston appeared as *Paul Pry*, before the present reminiscenter was born or thought of, and had uttered the magic words, "I hope I don't intrude," had the "catch phrase" of any

theatrical character obtained such a hold on the public. Theatre-goers may remember in later years how that drollest of droll comedians, John Lawrence Toole, made his comic apology "Excuse my glove" popular everywhere. Lord Dundreary said many absurd things, but the one that came to stay, and that remained long after the original had been forgotten, was his lordship's summing up of any argument or statement, with the phrase, "but that's the sort o' thing no fellow can understand," which was uttered by Sothern with a lisp and a stutter, as with glass fixed in his right eye he stared in a helplessly puzzle-headed sort of manner, quite inimitable, at the audience.

Now I had been, as a "mere layman," interested in the Colenso case, and, as being myself outside Anglicanism, I could not but be struck by the utter absence of any authoritative utterance which should be universally accepted by Anglicans of all parties, ritualistic, high, moderate, low and lowest, as decisive of, or as temporarily silencing, the controversy. It is of small importance nowadays; and the question of heterodoxy itself does not come into my province; as a matter of fact, it never did; and, upon my word, it now strikes me that *Lord Dundreary utterly refuting Bishop Colenso* was by far and away the most judicious method of treating a question which, *primarily*, concerned only theological students.

So as one who might be erroneously in this instance described as belonging to a certain class that proverbially rush in "where angels fear to tread," I took up my parable in shape of a pamphlet, which I am bound to say did not take me more than a couple of hours to write (I did it in chambers of which my friend "Charley" Coleman gave me the use in ancient days when I was still hovering about "brief-land"), and which I took to a law publisher in Chancery Lane, mainly because he happened to be handy),

and obtained from him cash down (not a particularly large sum, but it sufficed) for the pamphlet, which, being published, had a wonderful vogue and ran into thousands. He made his profit of about a hundred per cent., and I didn't grudge it him, as the publication was a risk, and the result, after all, might have been *nil*. This was the Preface, which was headed

" TO THE REFLECTIVE PUBLIC.

" It is with feelings of the greatest respect for its talented and noble author that I lay this Pamphlet before a deep-thinking and critical generation. His lordship first distinguished himself as an acute and careful student in a theological examination at the SISTER UNIVERSITY, where he finished (and very quickly too) his educational course. His lordship was asked by an examiner, ' What is the connecting link between the Old and New Testament ? ' After some minutes of profound thought the aristocratic candidate for the highest academical honours made this memorable reply :—

" ' The—the—the—connecting link wath when—when Peter cut off the ear—cut off the ear—of—of—of—Malachi, the latht of the Pwopheth.'

" After this specimen of the noble lord's accuracy it would be superfluous for us for one moment to question his ability as a subtle adversary of the learned and accurate Bishop of Natal."

Of course the whole point in this was the implied doubt of the learning and accuracy of Dr. Colenso by placing him on a level with Dundreary. As a matter of fact, the bishop had been severely handled by some of the leaders of the orthodox High Church party.

A few of his erudite lordship's observations are worth recording ; he says—

" To find out what the good bookth are, you'll have

to wead a lot of bad oneth, you know—and then take your—take your thoi the.”

Dundreary used not only to stutter and pronounce his “r”’s as “w”’s, but he used to hesitate in his speech and pause for some seconds before he surprised you with his conclusions. The pamphlet therefore “told” better when read aloud by anyone capable of imitating the Dundreary method. His lordship took an initial objection to Colenso; he wrote—

“I thaid I don’t like that Co—Co—Colenth; he invented au—au—awithmetic when I wath a boy; and hith book of tableth uthed to puthle—puthle me tho. But now I think I—I—I can turn the tableth on him—*tableth*—don’t you thee? Oh! that’t good—that’t good.”

Dundreary’s surprised delight at his own jokes was one of the salient features of Sothern’s performance. He goes on—

“It’t a vewy—vewy funny thing about thith Bithop; he—he—he went out to con—con—vert the Thuluth; and the—the Thuluth converted *him*.”

Then he says, alluding to the exodus of the Israelites, which was one of Dr. Colenso’s points—

“Tho the Bithop findth a lot of difficulty in the number of people who went out of Egypt, all the—all the huthbandth and wiveth, and daughterth, and thonth, and all their thonth and their daughterth, and their fatherth and m—m—motherth for thome—thomething like twenty-two mileth (p. 63).”

“*Anther*. There’t nothing—nothing in thith. *I’ll* puthle him with thomething—thomething more curiouth than thith. It’t a thort—a thort of widdle,—‘Ath I wath going to Thaint Iveth’ (I never, I never did go there, you know; but it ithn’t *me*, you know, it’t—it’t any feller), ‘I met a man with theven wiveth’ (that’t—that’t vewy impwoper)”

Then follows a footnote thus—

"The apparent impropriety of a plurality of wives, at which this scrupulous scion of the aristocracy is so highly indignant, has been treated with much charitable feeling and characteristic large-heartedness by the Bishop of Natal in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. His Lordship can scarcely be ignorant of the fact put before us by Canon Stanley in his *Eastern Church* (p. 13), viz. that the polygamy of the Jewish Church lingers here (*i.e.* in the Abyssinian, the most conservative of Christian societies, founded in the fourth century by the Church of Alexandria), 'after having been banished from the rest of the Christian world.' Of this existing state of affairs the learned Canon subsequently says, 'In the Church of Abyssinia we shall find . . . a complete sacrifice of the spirit of Christianity to the letter. And yet Polygamy is still an offence punishable by the laws of England. Surely our Legislature, professing to be actuated by the *spirit*, might yet make some concession to the *letter* of Christianity."

There were only eight pages of this pamphlet, which was "price threepence," and it was in this semi-serious tone throughout. It "went" enormously, but who nowadays cares one-sixth part of the selling price of this *brochure* for Colenso and his discoveries which were not so vastly original as to have escaped Voltaire, in the eighteenth century, when he was answered by an abbé, whose name escapes me, writing in the name of a Jewish Rabbi and his friends. Colenso, Voltaire, and all the ancient objections will be forthcoming from time to time, as will the answers and refutations.

CHAPTER XXVII

RUSTEM PACHA—FEZ—MOSLEMS—CHRISTIANS
—RICHARD BURTON—STANLEY—IRVING—
A GARRICK DINNER—A LONG SITTING—
HERKOMER—PORTRAIT—ARRANGEMENT IN
BLACK AND WHITE—SITTINGS—LULU LAND
—INVENTIVE GENIUS—THEATRICAL IM-
PROVEMENTS—EXPERIMENTS—AUGUSTUS
HARRIS—APPRECIATION

RUSTEM PACHA, Turkish Ambassador, I used frequently to meet at the cheery dinners given to excellent *convives* by Dr. Robson Roose. His Excellency was a great friend of the doctor's, whom therefore we, for the nonce, christened "Robson Roose-tem Pasha." When Rustem, who was a Catholic, "*Catholique et Romain*," first came to England, he went to hear mass at the Oratory. Being an unpretentious, self-effacing person, His Excellency gave no notice to the Oratorians of his intention of "assisting" at the High Mass, consequently no special instructions were issued to the "green-coat men," who see to the seating of the Oratory's congregation. So Rustem went, wearing, as is the custom of the East, his *fez*, and seated himself among the male division of the congregation, which is there divided on "the sheep and goats" principle, though nowadays, I think, this arrangement applies only to the central block of seats in their fine church. No sooner did the sharp eye

of a "green-coat" espy the red *fez* of Rustem Pacha than he was up to him and down on him.

"You must take off your hat, sir," orders the green-coat man, with plain Hibernian accent.

Rustem, unfamiliar with English, especially when spoken by an Irishman, does not clearly understand.

"Your hat," says official green-coat, indicating the *fez*. "Can't sit here in church with your hat on."

Rustem, the wise and politic, seeing that argument with an ignoramus would be useless, rises quietly from his seat, makes his reverence to the altar, doing duty from hand to mouth, and simply withdraws. As Rustem himself, much amused by the incident, told me this story, I may here repeat it and vouch for it on his authority as fact. "I disremember entirely," as the green-coat might have said, whether he ever heard mass at the Oratory again on a high day, or on any special occasion; but if he did, he probably warned the Oratorian fathers beforehand, and I trust that "green-coat" received a severe reprimand.

Rustem, whose conversation was always most interesting, told me how in their devotions the Mohammedans everywhere put to shame the Christians.

"They never disguise their religion," he said to me. "Wherever they are, whatever they are doing or talking about, and no matter what may be the company in which they find themselves, down at certain hours they go on a little piece of carpet, and say their prayers."

I replied to this, that frequently had I seen ecclesiastics, and occasionally some lay people, both at home and abroad, stop in their conversation at the sound of the Angelus bell, or at the striking of midday, and at six in the evening, to say their Angelus.

"Ecclesiastics perhaps," returned Rustem, "but how many lay people?"

"Very few," I admitted.

"But with the Mohammedans, wherever they may be, it is the rule not the exception, I think," added His Excellency; "and in various ways they set a good example to all Christians."

And it is not merely from Rustem Pacha that I have heard this. Sir Richard Burton, the great Eastern traveller, who in disguise entered a mosque and went through the pilgrimage to the shrine at Mecca, told me the same thing, and expressed a similar opinion. He was a queer bluff man, whom for the first time I met at a dinner party given by Henry Irving, long ago, at the Garrick, whereat were present, Stanley (the explorer, of whom I have made mention in the previous chapter), George Sala, Johnny Toole, Edmund Yates, William Howard Russell, and others. Now all these whom I have mentioned were excellent *raconteurs*. Irving effaced himself, and was determined that Stanley should give us his marvellous African experiences. However, as, at that time, Stanley was slow of speech and, always diffident, was unwilling to thrust himself before the company, no chance was offered him during dinner, as the conversation was general, the chief parts in it being admirably taken by Russell, Sala, Toole, Irving, and Burton. It was a memorable evening. Coffee and cigars having arrived, our host took advantage of the lull, and reclining in his chair with a large cigar he turned towards Stanley on his right, and thus addressed him—

"My dear fellow, you must tell us about—your—adventures—your wanderings—in—um—Africa."

And before Stanley could say "Certainly" or make any apology or preface, Irving had rapped the table with his knife, and, with pince-nez settled firmly on nose, he first regarded his opposite neighbour earnestly, then included everyone in a sweeping glance as he said—

"Now—gentlemen—I want you to listen—to—ar—Mr. Stanley. His experiences are most interesting," then he repeated emphatically as, slipping a little lower down in his chair, he glanced up at Stanley, "*most interesting.*"

These last words were a sort of "cue for Stanley," who was to understand from the emphatic repetition that if he had not got his "most interesting" experiences ready to hand he was to "make 'em so."

So we all settled down to listen to Stanley. Only thrice have I listened to Stanley—long ago. His matter was always (especially at that time when he was in such demand), as Irving had described it, "*most interesting,*" but he had not then acquired the art of telling his own excellent stories. His narrative at that time needed careful editing, and he himself, however impressive his delivery in a big assembly, could not for a small and select audience give dramatic point to such scenes and incidents as were essentially dramatic. His humour, too, was of the driest, but his eye was ever on the alert to see if his points were taken.

Now it must be remembered that his narrative *vivâ voce* was given in the presence of a light-hearted company, who preferred the repartee, the "good story," the imported jest, to any amount of adventures among strange people and curious creatures, particularly when doled out to them in a measured tone, and in sentences so deliberately uttered that those who tried to "hang on his lips" gave up the attempt and fell back in their chairs. "The Ancient Mariner" with his story was "not in it" with Stanley on this occasion. Somehow his manner and his strange tales fascinated me, and, like the Athenians of old, I "determined to hear more of this matter." The others gradually succumbed; one furtively looked at his watch and was suddenly missing; another apologised for interrupting to ask for a soda and

whisky. This demand, which in no way interfered with the steady flow of Stanley's narration, caused a slight movement among the audience, one rising to ring the bell ; and the summons being instantly answered by the waiter, several guests indicated in whispers their desire for drinks and cigars, which having been brought, and the company having once again settled down to resume their listening to a story that had gone on steadily the whole time without interruption, certain of the guests were noticeable by their absence. About a fourth of the party had taken the opportunity of retiring ; nor did they return. Irving, as host, behaved admirably. Partially disappearing under the table, he was stretched out at full length, his head supported by the top rail of the chair-back, in which position he appeared to be listening as carefully as does a judge, with his eyes shut, to a lengthy speech of counsel. Occasionally he would nod ; and lest a false construction should be placed on this Homeric action, he would open his eyes, murmur approval, give a glance, somewhat sardonically, round the table, and then relapse into his attitude of " attention." At some time or other that narrative concerning " the Dark Continent " was finished, and with Irving and one or two others—who they were I forget—I was left to congratulate the explorer, and not only that, but to walk a part of the way home with him, when I took the opportunity of expressing a hope that we soon might meet again, which we did, at the house of the well-known *Times* correspondent, Colonel Hozier, when Stanley, in his very best manner, told me all that was interesting in the private and public life of some Central African chief or other, and I was treated to the pick of his many curious unpublished adventures in the strangest parts and among the queerest people. This was a most amusing evening, but that one when, at Irving's, the *raconteurs* Sala, Billy Russell, Burton, and Edmund Yates couldn't get a

word in edgeways, and had to sit and listen in silence, was unique.

My friendship with Hubert Herkomer, R.A., is one of long standing and of very short sitting, as he painted my portrait in about four days, a very "rapid act" of workmanship. The days were odd ones; I doubt if, in those few days,—and that was all Herkomer required to start one portrait, reject it, start another and finish it,—I gave him two consecutive sittings. The picture is so perfect that had it occupied him during nine sittings it might well have been described as "a nine days' wonder." It was exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in Regent Street, not having been in time for the Academy show. It is certainly a *tour de force* even in the history of the many remarkable works of this artist. Within quite recent years I have not seen his house at Bushey, but when he painted the above-mentioned portrait he was living in one of a couple of ordinary country cottages, which he was gradually changing into palaces of art. Already, at that time, some fifteen years ago, he had built art schools at Bushey, in "Lulu Land," as the district has come to be named (by Herkomer, I suppose), where he lectured to his students, who took lodgings in the neighbourhood and benefited by his instruction and example without the payment of any fees *quâ* fees, but only expending money on "properties" essential to their work. Any pupil making good progress and able to rent a studio could take one in the Herkomer schools at such a moderate rent as only represented its proportion of the percentage on the capital employed in the building. I believe this art school has been of the greatest service to pupils. Professor Herkomer (he was not at that time so dignified, by the way; his professorship came later), by this arrangement, could follow out his own plans and teach in his own way; if any pupil gave trouble, he or she was

at once dismissed, and by no apology could anyone be reinstated. A teacher who deals only with volunteers and takes no payment is clearly master of the situation ; and if, as in our professor's case, he is also a real Master of his Art, he is simply absolute, and deservedly so. Pupils need not seek him unless they like ; nor are they bound to remain. All that is required of them, while studying, is, that they listen and obey, strictly limiting their inquiries to such difficulties, or to such points of interest, as may arise out of each lecture.

Herkomer, ever original, was much exercised in mind by the mechanism employed in stagecraft. In his prophetic eye he saw splendid possibilities to which Augustus Harris, one of the 'cutest of stage-craftsmen, Telbin, Hawes, Craven, and other scenic artists and the best professional stage-machinists appeared, to the professor, absolutely blind. To me, so much engaged at that time on pieces requiring brilliant and startling scenic effects, he came and unfolded his scheme. For burlesque and extravaganza Herkomer had no liking, and I was tiring of them. His proposal was for the production of a thorough novelty, which, as far as I can remember, had had a prototype in Boucicault's *Babil and Bijou* (at Covent Garden, I think, it was produced, or at Her Majesty's, many years before), though this was not, in its essence, the style of entertainment that Herkomer wished to popularise. There was to be a good, strong, but simple plot : it might be in so many tableaux and so many acts,—this would be a matter of arrangement ; he had new inventions for stage lighting which should entirely supersede the "footlights" ; and he proposed mechanism for his changes of scenery that should produce twice the effect, at that time obtained, at half the cost both in first outlay and in subsequent nightly working. Many other improvements he suggested which were certainly new and

original at that period, and which, as in the case of the footlights or "flote," have been pretty generally adopted. Personally, I was delighted at having such a chance offered me, although at the moment I did not see how I was to set aside all my engagements and give myself up entirely to this work.

"No," explained Herkomer, "I do not, of course, mean that you should do so. I only want to make a bargain with you. I will paint your portrait for you, and you shall write me a piece."

To this most handsome offer I could only object that it would be some time before I could set to work on the play, and that there were other difficulties. But, waiving all obstacles, he merely set my work on a piece, whatever the result, against his work on the picture. He hoped to build a theatre on his own property at Bushey, where he could show, at all events, the commencements of his various plans for revolutionising stage mechanism, and for introducing here a class of entertainment which had hitherto not been seen on the boards of any theatre. Willingly did I join hands over this; it was a bargain.

"Now," suggested Herkomer, "as you can't set to work at once, and I know you can't, *I* can. I have a few days free, and if you will settle to run down on certain days within the next fortnight to Bushey, I'll execute my part of the bargain and wait for yours at your own time."

So it was fixed up. The sittings gave me a delightful opportunity of making the acquaintance of Herkomer's father and uncle, both accomplished artists in wood and iron work, a most charming and interesting pair of brothers, hale and hearty at eighty and over eighty, and both strict vegetarians.

The variety of artistic work that the professor was engaged upon staggered me. Metal-moulding, enamelling, wood-

carving, mezzo-tinting, architectural designs, musical composition, playing the zither (see his engraving of his own capital picture of "A Zither Evening with my Students"), and performing on the piano not only works of masters that he knew by heart but also his own compositions, which, if I rightly remember, were generally impromptu, at least from no written score, and always perfect in harmony, or, if occasionally they were not so, he detected his own error and corrected it on the spot. *Magister Artium* indeed! Besides the innumerable orders for portraits he has received and executed, besides those he is still continuing to receive, both from at home and abroad, he can decorate himself all over with another kind of "orders," Bavarian, Prussian, and French,—the Prussian *pour le mérite* is the most coveted of all, but brings no title with it; but the Bavarian order inserts the "von" before the surname and is equal to an English patent of nobility,—while he represents several professorships, no end of gold and silver medalists, is a distinguished honorary member of art societies at home in England, Scotland, Wales, and Australia, while in France he is a foreign associate, in Berlin an academician, a learned professor in Munich, and equal to five honorary members of art academies in Antwerp, Brussels, Holland, Sweden, and the "*Vereinigung der Bildenden Künstler Oesterreichs*" at Vienna! And even now I have touched only on the fringe of his list of honours. Should Professor Hubert von Herkomer choose to appear with all his blushing decorations thick upon him, what with ribbons and medals, there wouldn't be much left of the professor that would be visible to the naked eye.

He did give a remarkable performance at Bushey. The theatre, his own, was crowded each day by distinguished men and women of all arts, sciences, and professions. The piece played was not the one I had undertaken to write

for him : I had drawn up a *scenario* and had written the greater part of an act, but somehow it refused to come out ship-shape, and the professor became his own dramatist, as he was his own scene-painter, composer, machinist, chorus-master, stage-manager, and everything else conceivable. The performance was excellent ; and, by the way, I forgot to add that the professor, on this occasion, appeared as an excellent serious pantomimist, and distinguished himself as no mean actor and tuneful singer.

I remember Gus Harris being present and watching it closely. He congratulated everybody. We returned to town together.

"Did you have a talk with Herkomer about the stage effects of moonlight ?" I asked Druriolanus, hoping to hear that he was going to adopt Herkomer's improvements and inventions.

"Very good, aren't they ?" observed Druriolanus evasively.

"Very," I returned. "*You* could do a lot with them," I added flatteringly.

Druriolanus, lolling on his seat (we were in the train), winked at me ; that was all. Druriolanus could put an immense amount of meaning into a wink. If he emphasised this with his elbow, giving a nudge in the ribs, and finished with a broad smile, not a grin, and another wink (same eye), you required no further expression of opinion from Druriolanus, and, if you did, you wouldn't have got it.

After this, he talked about the art school, praised Herkomer as "a wonderfully clever chap," and told me he had invited the professor to come at pantomime-time and *see how things were managed at Drury Lane*.

And this was the effect of the artistic lesson on Augustus

Druriolanus.¹ Of course, his next Christmas production at Drury Lane excelled all his previous efforts, but whether there was a remarkably effective moonlight scene in it or not escapes this deponent's memory.

¹ Sir Augustus Harris was knighted on the occasion of the German Emperor's visit to the City, 1890-1.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CARDINAL MANNING—JOHN BRIGHT—JEFFERSON—SOTHERN AS DUNDREARY—DILLON CROKER—KIKI—MARK LEMON—JIMMY DAVISON—*MUSICAL WORLD*—FRED CLAY—ARTHUR SULLIVAN—HIS INITIALS—SHIRLEY BROOKS—E. L. BLANCHARD—H. BYRON—MEREDITH—AT ESHER—BURLESQUE VERSE—ANOTHER GEORGE—RHYME—MARIE WILTON—DION BOUCICAULT—TAYLOR—BEN WEBSTER—MISS FURTADO—TWO *HELENS*—DROPPING THE CURTAIN—FINISH

FROM among many docketed parcels of interesting letters I select a few, which may be here conveniently inserted. The first is from Cardinal Manning, whose introductions were of considerable use to us, my wife and myself, in Rome, though I regret to say that "circumstances over which we had no control" cut short our stay, and so, to our very great regret, we were compelled to leave the Eternal City without having been able to avail ourselves of the great privilege of being received in audience by His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. Monsignor Stonor's invitation arrived as we were departing.

“ ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE, WESTMINSTER, S.W.,
February 19, 1889.

“ MY DEAR MR. BURNAND,—I will write straight to Mgr. Stonor in Rome (27 Via Sistine), and will ask him to do all in his power for you.

“ I send you two of my cards, one for him, and one for Mgr. della Volpe, the Pope's Maestro di Camera.

“ It gives me much pleasure to be of any use to you and Mrs. Burnand.—Believe me always, very truly yours,

“ HENRY E., *Cardinal-Archbishop.*”

The next is from John Bright, whom I had the pleasure of meeting three or four times, not more. On one occasion at a small party given by Sir William Agnew, our host craftily beguiled his distinguished guest into making an after-dinner speech, which, seeing that he was utterly taken by surprise and not so pleased at the opportunity afforded him as *we* were at the chance of hearing the great orator *en petit comité*, was a thing to be remembered. John Bright was a bit angry at first, but he got over it, and made a most amusing speech of quite a quarter of an hour's duration. I had occasion to write to him upon a small matter in no way connected with this little party, and received the following reply :—

“ ROCHDALE, June 23, 1886.

“ DEAR MR. BURNAND,—Mr. Miller has often written to me on political questions—he is a great writer of letters—but I think nothing I have written to him can be of such consequence that he should trouble you about it.

“ I advise you not to give yourself any anxiety about any letter of mine.—Yours very truly,

“ JOHN BRIGHT.”

How careless some folks are as to dating letters ! I have come upon one written by the celebrated American actor, Jo Jefferson, without any date. It simply says he is off to Scotland and then to America. Jefferson was the original of *The American Cousin*, written to order for him by Tom Taylor. But in this piece there was the part of an absurd English nobleman, which, as it happened, fell to the lot of Sothern, then a comparatively unknown man on the stage in America. Sothern was rather loath to undertake the part, but by Boucicault's advice accepted it, Boucicault lending him such material for costume as he happened to have with him on tour in the States. On the first night the accident of a stutter and a tumble, never contemplated at rehearsal, made the fortune of *Lord Dundreary*. His part grew and grew. Finally it became too big for the principal character, and Jo Jefferson, the hero of the piece, after a consultation with Sothern, decided on dividing the piece between them. Sothern was to seek his fortune in England with *The American Cousin*, himself as Lord Dundreary being the attraction, while Jo Jefferson would remain in America with the piece as originally written for him. How its author Tom Taylor came out of this I don't know. I hope both, however, paid him, for fees were very small at that period. It must have been rather a difficult matter to decide. Had the single piece been multiplied by two, or had it been merely divided ? In the first case the author would have been entitled to double fees ; in the second he would have received half fees from Sothern and Jefferson. Or if the original contract were with Jefferson an entirely new one might have been made with Sothern. Sothern's first appearance here as Lord Dundreary was a failure, so much so that Buckstone, the lessee of the Haymarket, contemplated taking the piece off the boards as soon as possible, and on the first night (I had this on the best

authority) the actors and actresses of the Haymarket Company avoided meeting the young actor, Edward Sothorn, strange to London, as they did not like condoling with him on a failure! How it grew into a success I do not know. Personally, I heard it once, and certainly condemned it. It did not make me laugh, and the celebrated letter that Lord Dundreary reads aloud I had myself come across, long before, in a book called *Irish Diamonds* by the Brothers Smith. Meeting, soon afterwards, Dillon Croker, he gave me an imitation of *Dundreary*, which made me laugh so much that I awoke to the humour I had missed. Revisiting *Dundreary* I was delighted, and retracted my opinion; but by that time the critics had found out their mistake, and the public had discovered the peculiar humour of *Lord Dundreary*. The Haymarket Company, no longer afraid to meet the latest addition to their ranks, now welcomed him heartily, and to all intents and purposes Sothorn gradually became manager of the Haymarket Theatre *vice* J. B. Buckstone, who, still remaining lessee and manager, left all the cares of the office to Edward Sothorn. After this Sothorn only achieved minor successes. He never absolutely failed, but whatever he played, he was always remembered as *Dundreary*. When Jo Jefferson came to London he captivated us all with his wonderful *Rip Van Winkle*, and, as in the history of the English and American drama, the name of Sothorn will ever be associated with *Dundreary*, so will Jefferson's be with *Rip Van Winkle*.

"Kiki" Du Maurier and myself used frequently to correspond as to French books, advising one another what to take or to avoid. Frequently his letters were illustrated, which naturally enhanced their value.

I have one which is characteristic of Kiki Du Maurier in a hurry; dashing off a letter, making a kind inquiry after our

friend William Bradbury's health, and adding antescrypt and postscript.

There is also a delightful one with dashed off caricature sketches of Sir John Tenniel smoking a long pipe, Charles Keene a short one, and himself, "Little Jack Horner" in the corner, with a cigarette.

I have, I regret to say, only one specimen of dear old Mark Lemon's handwriting. The date is unfinished, but I should reckon it at about 1866.

Ordinarily, "the Whitefriars" office was always open on a Saturday, and there Shirley and "Pater" Evans, with one or two other "gossips" used to forgather with Mark, when "old Caspar's work was done," over "a quiet cigar," and, as Dick Swiveller hath it, "a modest quencher."

I have had occasion to mention the eccentric "Jimmy Davison," first-rate musical critic of the *Times*. I have just found a letter of his, of a most mystifying character. Jimmy Davison edited *The Musical World*, to which the late Charles Lamb Kenney and Sutherland Edwards, still with us and as fresh an operatic critic as ever, contributed, but no matter what the title of the periodical might have been, there was invariably a corner kept in it for the most utterly lunatic contributions ever penned by mortal man. The humour was cryptic, to be appreciated only by those initiated into the inner circle of Davisonry. Jimmy Davison enjoyed this nonsense amazingly. He was so serious as a musician and as a musical critic that to burst out into utter nonsensical rhymes or prose was a positive relief to him. In these wild absurdities he "let himself go," but never so far that he could not control his Hanwellian inspiration. After Davison's death this eccentric paper perished, as Sutherland Edwards tells me, "through an insane attempt made to carry it on as a rational journal."

Davison dates the one letter I happen to have preserved from the "*Eel and Butler*—August 4, Shelley's birthday," and in it he rambles on about Arthur Sullivan, Christine Nilsson, and "H. Baron C. Mouton de Kenni," which was his facetious way of writing "Charles Lamb Kenney," and he quotes "poor Mad. Dülcken" (thus abbreviating Madame Dülcken, and unfortunately depriving her of her "*âme*") as being accustomed to say "*J'aimais esprit*";—but the rest of this letter is an impenetrable mystery, as there is no witty saying, no humorous story in it from beginning to end; though, *réflexion faite*, this omission would have been, according to the eccentric Jimmy, "just where the fun came in."

Jimmy Davison was a great admirer of both Arthur Sullivan and of his friend and *co-æqualis* Fred Clay. Ernest Clay Ker Seymer was Fred's eldest brother. Ernest and his wife were of all our hospitable compatriots in Paris the most hospitable. What delightful days and evenings have I not spent with them in the rooms in the Champs Elysées! Afterwards the Clay Ker Seymers had a place in Leicestershire, and I am far from certain that they did not for a while rent a property in Sussex famous for its ghostly coach and horses, which could be heard coming up the drive at midnight, a sure sign of woe to the hereditary owners. Arthur Sullivan, Fred Clay, and myself were almost inseparable at this date, which is now prehistoric.

By the merest accident I have come across a letter from Arthur Sullivan, written long before he had made a name for himself, prior even to the days of *Cox and Box*, when he and his mother lived in Claverton Terrace, St. George's Road, within ten minutes' walk of my house in Belgrave Road, and while he still held the appointment of organist at the church (near Wilton Place I think it was, but its locality and name I cannot call to mind), and had not

relinquished playing the organ in the *Prophète*, *Faust*, and other operas, behind the scenes, at Covent Garden. He, too, had a pleasant way of dropping into drawings in a letter, and his last reference was to the latest addition to *la famille Burnand* at that time, some thirty-seven years ago.

À propos of Arthur's mother, who was a most amusing old lady, and as devoted to her elder son as was he to her—for there never could have been a better son than was Arthur to his mother—I remember his telling me an amusing anecdote. The Duke of Edinburgh, to whom Arthur had been introduced, was, as most of us remember, an enthusiastic musician, and frequently, for quiet practice on the violin, he would drop into Arthur Sullivan's in the most informal way. On such occasions old Mrs. Sullivan would treat H.R.H. just "as one of the family," and would no more "fash herself" concerning his exalted rank, than if she had been in utter ignorance of it.

One afternoon when the Duke and Arthur, having finished their duet, were sitting down to a homely "dish o' tea" provided by Mrs. Sullivan, it suddenly occurred to her to start the subject of family names and titles, which puzzled the good lady considerably.

"Sir," she said, "your family name is Guelph?"

"My dear mother"—began Arthur remonstrating.

"But it is, isn't it?" she persisted.

"Certainly," replied the Duke, much amused. "What's the matter with it, Mrs. Sullivan?"

"Oh, nothing," returned the excellent old lady musingly, "only I can't understand why you don't call yourself by your proper name."

Arthur wanted to explain to her, but the Duke would not allow him.

"There's nothing to be ashamed of in the name of 'Guelph,' Mrs. Sullivan," he said gravely.

"That's exactly what I say," persisted Arthur's mother, "nothing whatever as far as *I* know. And that being so, why you should not call yourself by it I can't understand."

Arthur had it out with her afterwards, but for a long time she held to it that "Guelf or Guelph," whichever they liked, ought to be the surname of all the members of the Royal Family.

Fred Sullivan, Arthur's brother, was one of the most naturally comic little men I ever came across. He, too, was a first-rate practical musician, and Arthur always found him employment in any orchestra that he had to conduct. As he was the most absurd person, so was he the very kindest. The brothers were devoted to each other, but Arthur went up, and poor little Fred went under.

The godfathers and godmothers of Arthur Sullivan were much to be blamed. At his christening they bestowed on the future composer the *prénoms* of "Arthur Seymour," utterly forgetting that his surname began with an "S." Therefore it so happened that never, when he arrived at years of discretion, could "Arthur Seymour Sullivan" sign his initials in full. Unfortunate. But sponsors at the font should be very careful.

Among my letters is one which has a melancholy interest for all who remember handsome, gay, *toujours débonnaire* Shirley Brooks. It was written just one week before he died. There is no sign of failing in the hand or in the humour. He was a first-rate correspondent, and to him letter-writing was in reality a recreation, as it was to Augustus Sala, though, of course, neither would admit the fact.

I have mentioned Edmund (or Edward) Laman Blanchard. It appears from this letter in my possession that he was getting up, or had had arranged for him, a benefit perform-

ance in which, with W. S. Gilbert, H. J. Byron, and others, I had been asked to take part and to appear on the stage in a club scene with several other dramatists and journalists. I suppose it came off and that it proved a "bumper" for the *beneficiaire*, who was known as "the hero of a hundred pantomimes," all, as I believe, at Drury Lane. He belonged to the old very Bohemian state of things that in my time was rapidly ceasing to be. Blanchard was kindness personified, ever ready to lend a helping hand, and to give encouragement to a youthful "commencing" writer, dramatist or journalist.

While examining the packets of letters that have accumulated during over a quarter of a century I find one from Henry J. Byron dated Southern Lodge, Buxton, December 1877, wherein he tells me that only a "beastly rheumatism" has prevented him from going out, and he congratulates me on the "admirable notion of utilising Skelt." The piece he alludes to is *The Red Rover*, played at the Strand, all the characters being got up after the old-fashioned "penny plain, twopence coloured" printed figures sold in sheets and known as "Skelt's Scenes and Characters," now rather difficult to obtain; even at that time their popularity was just on the wane, as was that of the old toy theatre for "the nursery stage of the drama." So H. J. Byron, the perpetual punster of genuinely original wit, finishes a letter without a single pun in it!! And this it is, as it appears to me, that makes this letter of his absolutely unique.

From H. J. Byron to George Meredith, from the witty writer of burlesque to the satirical novelist and trenchant writer of "English as she is writ" by George, may seem a considerable leap. Yet in my earliest literary recollections these two are associated. When I was staying with Maurice Fitzgerald and George Meredith, "in the beginning," as already narrated in these veracious chronicles, at Esher, I

had just come from hearing the new burlesque *The Lady of Lyons* at the Strand Theatre, written by Henry J. Byron, and one of the songs had got hold of me so fast that I found myself constantly humming the tune and singing a verse or two. During our country walks, and in the quiet evenings, George Meredith would "call" for this song, and I used to comply with the request by giving, as I fear, a rather maimed version of it. What, however, used to delight George was the "swing and go" of it, and the catch of the rhythm. It was sung, through his nose, by Clarke as *Beauséant*, and ran thus :

"I've hit on a trick they can't see through, not were they
Argus-eyed, Oh!
As soon as possibel Miss Deschapelles shall be my lovely bride,
Oh!"

And the lilt of this to some old American jingle called "*Skid-a-ma-lik*" used to take George Meredith's fancy. I should doubt whether at my time George Meredith cared much for the drama, that is the stage representation of it, even in its highest comedy or its deepest tragedy, while as for farce and burlesque I should not be very much surprised to learn that he had never seen either one or the other. As, however, he is on the spot, and a very charming rustic spot it is too, to contradict any statement I may make "in error," he has three courses open to him—to corroborate, to deny, or to say nothing at all about it.

I possess a characteristic letter from George, ever kindly. To come upon these letters is like meeting a dear old friend unexpectedly. It is the dear old friend's hand, and I grasp it heartily.

I have a few of George Augustus Sala's letters, all in his small copperplate kind of writing. I remember calling on him when he lived in Mecklenburgh Square and finding him

at work in his study. He showed me the books of reference which he had compiled himself, consisting of folios of newspaper cuttings, concerning men and things, alphabetically arranged. Only once before had I seen anything like the method and order of his compilation, and that was in ledgers of reference kept by Charles Reade the novelist, who, whenever he came across any notable event in print, any anecdote, or indeed any information that might at some time or other serve his purpose, acted on Cap'en Cuttle's motto of "when found, make a note of," and then and there book'd and folio'd it for future use.

Sala's letter to me is an eccentric jingle, and dated "Reform Club : Pall Mall, Wednesday, fifth April " (year omitted), runs thus, in Hudibrastic fashion :—

" 'Tis most courteous, Mister Burnand
I should very much like to see your hand,
'S witty and cunning work, in the Grand
New 'xtravaganza which you've planned
(Tho' I'm fain to confess I don't understand
Much about theatres) *n'importe* ; and
If you'll send the pasteboard by post or hand
Mrs. G. A. S. shall bring her hus-band,
And I'm sure Miss Wilton's house will be crammed.
P.S. And I hope *Pirithoüs* won't be dammed."

His wish was granted, as *Pirithoüs*, though not within measurable distance of the unexampled run of *Ixion*, did very well. That George A. Sala did not know much about theatres at this time is shown by his calling the Royalty "Miss Wilton's House." Marie Wilton (Lady Bancroft) never had anything to do with the Royalty Theatre, as, after quitting the little Strand Theatre, she had achieved great success, and, indeed, had fairly commenced the making of the name and reputation of the Prince of Wales's Theatre, the "little house off Tottenham Court Road," before *Pirithoüs* was brought out by Mrs. Selby at the Royalty, 13th April

1865. It was about this time, 1865-66, that the Bancrofts renounced burlesque, the last on which Lady Bancroft (Miss Marie Wilton) appeared being *Little Don Giovanni*, by H. J. Byron, when that excellent comedian John Hare, admirable impersonator of certain types of elderly and old men, played the part of *Zerlina*, "a simple peasant girl." This was the last of the burlesques at the Prince of Wales's Theatre.

In the course of my researches I have come across a very characteristic letter from Dion Boucicault. He had years before this had a quarrel with the Dramatic Authors' Society, and he had not been altogether in the right : nor had the Society. Of this difficulty between authors and the Society I, being quite a novice, knew nothing, except by the tradition of the elders. However, easy-going as I was, even I had become dissatisfied with the state of business as done by the Dramatic Authors' Society. Prices were going up ; fees were increasing ; and Mr. Dion Boucicault was getting for one successful piece more in two weeks than any one of the old stagers had been accustomed to make in two years.

I liked Dion ; he not only amused me with his stories and his wit, but he elicited my admiration for his business capacity. For a dramatic author to really "make money" was, when I began (not to make money, but to write in order to try and do so), a thing unheard of. He could just manage to exist by his trade ; that was all. Planché, the Broughs, Dance, Talfourd, Tom Taylor, Sterling Coyne, and all of the dramatists of that day had a hand-to-mouth existence as far as the stage brought any contribution towards their incomes. Except Tom Taylor and Planché, they were none of them in what is known as "society," and therefore the calls on their pocket were not extravagant.

The plan was, in London, for a manager to pay so much for a piece (a hundred pounds per act was the very highest sum given), and then, in the provinces, the theatres were

rated at various prices. About five shillings per night for a one-act farce may be stated as an average sum. Boucicault upset all this, and those dramatists who came after him, and who acted upon his plan, reaped the benefit of his daring innovation.

Boucicault was a diamond who cut a diamond, and where there had been any attempt to "Jew" him, he took the very first opportunity of showing how, where two could play at that game, only *one* could be successful, and that one would be himself.

He had gone into the Adelphi Theatre with that admirably constructed and cleverly written drama, the *Colleen Bawn*, which had previously been refused a home at two or three theatres, and Ben Webster had grudgingly settled to give him a comparatively small salary per week for himself, his wife, and the drama. When the piece proved an unheard-of success, being the first in the West End of London of all dramas with a "sensation scene," Ben Webster shook hands with himself on having made so clever a bargain. Unfortunately, he did not in a generous mood offer to make a handsome increase to the bird that laid the golden eggs. The bird, commonly thought to be a goose, was as wise and as artful as a raven. One Saturday evening, early in the run of the piece, the news was brought to Ben Webster that Boucicault and his wife were both invalided; impossible for them to appear. The engagement did not permit of anyone being substituted in their parts—in fact, the engagement was terminable probably at a fortnight's notice, or a month's; and without Boucicault and his wife where would be the piece? Ben Webster foresaw the collapse of the Adelphi *pro tem*. He saw at once that the illness, which was *nullis medicabilis herbis*, would yield to open-handed treatment. Would Boucicault name his terms? Ah! that was business. Certainly; an agreement to be drawn up at once, to the effect

that Dion and wife were to have so much as salary, and he, as author, was to have a share in the profits which his work was bringing in, "a share after expenses"—which expenses Dion carefully limited to a certain fixed figure per night—and Myles-na-Coppaleen with the Colleen Bawn would be themselves again, playing that very night to the crowded house. No sooner said and written than signed, sealed, and delivered; most wisely on the part of Ben Webster, who, not playing in the piece himself, could now take a long holiday while placing to his account funds enough to carry him over any losses for the next three years.

I have not got the date of a letter written to me by Ben Webster, but it seems that I must have acted on the Boucicaultian advice, and that before producing a piece at the Olympic I must have proposed such terms as Ben Webster was becoming accustomed to since the Boucicaultian treatment. Ben Webster simply says: "My Dear Burnand,—The Olympic Theatre holds a hundred and thirty pounds, but there has been a hundred and seventy-three in it.—Yours ever, etc."

It is curt and limited strictly to business. To what piece it referred I do not remember. The price of seats in those days was much lower than now; and the Olympic (were it in existence nowadays) at present prices would hold something like £230 instead of £173 at its full complement.

In his very neat and ladylike hand, very characteristic of the *suave* old writer (for he was old when I first knew him), I have a specimen of the ever-polite and ever-pleasant Sir Julius Benedict. I wrote, or rather, adapted from the French, two *Helens*, one for the Alhambra and the other for the Adelphi. Of the latter, the date is 1866, and perhaps Sir Julius's letter may apply to this. In the cast of the piece was included the veteran Paul Bedford as *Calchas*, Mrs. A. Mellon (Miss Woolgar) as *Paris*, J. L. Toole as *Menelaus*,

and the fascinating little Miss Furtado as *Helen*. My *Helen* at the Alhambra came out seven years later, in 1873, when Miss Rose Belle, as *Paris*, divided the attractiveness of the principals in the cast with Miss Kate Santley as *Hélène*, and Mr. Harry Paulton as the comic representative of *Menelaus*.

It is amusing to learn from a note in the published book of the opera at the Alhambra that the duet in the second act, between Paris and Helen, was "cut short by an order from the Lord Chamberlain's office, the whole duet having been previously excised when the original opera in French was performed at the St. James's, with Madame Schneider as *La Belle Hélène*." I do remember Madame Schneider, as clever as she was handsome, in this character, and her performance of it was uncommonly *risqué*, but she was justified by the character of the part and of such a song as "*Ah belle Vénus quel plaisir trouves tu*," which most of my readers, who may remember the opera, will call to mind as something *un peu fort*.

And now there is space for "no more at present from yours truly." The overflow must wait. Who, except the most accomplished and thoroughly practised orator, that has been called upon to make a speech, has not, after his oration as a thing of the past, remembered a hundred things that he had omitted, and has not seen clearly all the brilliant hits that he might have made, and the sparkling epigrams that ought to have occurred to him but didn't? Such is, to a certain extent, my case. I look at my notes and I see there *memoranda* sufficient to fill volumes. I meet old friends and they remind me of places, persons, circumstances, and groups of stories, all well worth the telling.

But "here break we off." Should these reminiscences fail to interest some and to beguile the leisure of others, then I

apologise,—“ my fault, ladies and gentlemen.” But, if they serve their turn and suffice for interest and amusement, my object is gained, and adding that, on demand, “there is plenty more where this has come from,” I “humbly take my leave,” and am everybody’s most obedient servant.

INDEX

- à Beckett, Arthur, 252, 401-402, 404-405, 407.
 „ "Cooky," 401, 403.
 „ Gilbert, 401-402, 403-405.
 „ Gilbert Abbott, 404.
 „ Mrs. Gilbert, 387.
 Abergeldie Castle, *The Colonel* performed at, 365.
 Adelphi Theatre, 370, 372, 447, 449.
Adventures of Mr. Ledbury, The, 93, 129, 171.
Age, The, 404.
 Alderson, Rev. Cecil, 181.
 Alhambra, 449.
American Cousin, The, 437.
 Anderson (medium), 338-340.
 Arcedeckne, Andrew, 94, 136.
 Archer, Tom, 262-263, 405.
Ariel, 367.
 Armytage, Sir George, 92.
 Arundel, Lord, 353-354.
 Arundel Club, 239-240, 246-247, 267, 405.
Atalanta, 170.
 Austin, Alfred, 267.
 „ Mrs., 324-329.
 „ Walter, 324, 328.
 Authors' fees, 295-296, 437, 446-447.
Babil and Bijou, 430.
 Bacon, Arthur, 316.
 Bailey, Eric, 362 note, 366.
 Ballantine, Sergeant, 136.
 Bancroft, Lady (Miss Marie Wilton), 170, 297, 368 and note, 446.
 „ Sir Squire, 358-360.
 Barnett, Humphrey, 373.
 Bath, 53-54, 56.
 Bayard, Mr., 384.
 Beckett. *See* à Beckett.
 Bedford, Paul, 96, 448.
 Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden, 342.
 Beefsteak Club, 408, 410-412.
 Begrez, M., 96.
 Bell, Laura, 130-131.
 Belle, Miss Rose, 449.
 Bellew, Rev. F., 386.
 Belmore, George, 246, 262.
Belphegor, the Mountebank, 169-170.
 Benedict, Sir Julius, 448.
 Benicia Boy, *The*, 242.
 Bennett, Miss Julia, 32 note.
 „ Mr., 406.
 Benson, Father, 188-193.
 Bentinck, George C., 413.
 Bernard, Bayle, 314, 346, 355, 358.
 Besley, Mr., Q.C., 248, 250-251.
 Bethel the Bursar, 85.
 Biddulph, Dick, 99.
 „ Myddleton, 103.
 Bishop, George, 52, 287.
 Blacketts, *The*, 270.
Black Eye'd Susan, 246, 253, 289, 291, 293-294, 299-302, 313, 314.
 Blanchard, Edward Laman, 240-241, 246, 263, 267, 334-337, 443.
 Blanche, Miss Ada, 376.
 Bland, James, 303.
Blue Beard, 10-11, 367.
 Blunt, Arthur, 411, 414.
 Bodkin, Serjeant, 248, 250.
 Bolton, T. H., 348.

- Bombastes Furioso*, 102, 103
note.
- Booth, General, 203.
- Boucicault, Dion, in *Colleen Bawn*, 114, 253, 295, 447-448; champions authors' rights, 314; helps Sothern, 437; quarrel with Dramatic Authors' Club, 446; success as a playwright, 447; otherwise mentioned, 315.
- Bourdillon, Tom, 245.
- Bowles, T. G., 402, 403.
- Box and Cox*, 60, 161, 164.
- Bradbury, William, 273, 275, 439.
- Braid, Mr., 172.
- Brandon, G. H., 143 note.
- Brandram, Samuel, 238.
- Bright, John, 436.
- Brighton, at school at, 57-60, 63; visits to, 316-317.
- Brodie, Sir Benjamin, 114.
- Brooks ("The Protean Wit-ness"), 137.
- .. Shirley, twits Mayhew, 276, 280; at *Punch* dinners, 279-283; ability of, 286, 371; intimacy with, 305; quarrel with Sala, 306; adventures at a Séance, 338-342; *Punch* edited by, 370; last letter from, 442; otherwise mentioned, 406-407.
- Brough Brothers, 136, 239, 247, 263, 314, 346, 446.
- Brown, Hablot K. ("Phiz"), 48, 272, 274.
- Browne, Dr. Harold, 182.
- Browning, Robert, 413-415.
- Bruce, Edgar, 359, 360, 364, 365, 366, 368-369.
- Brumfit, Mr., 93-94.
- Brunton, 264.
- Buckingham, Leicester, 239, 247.
- Buckstone, J. B., 32 note, 136, 171-174, 315, 437-438.
- .. R., in *The Colonel*, 366.
- Bunn, Alfred, 206-207, 388.
- Burnand, Francis (father), business of, 6; operatic tastes of, 41-42; displeasure of, 196-198; surety at Lincoln's Inn, 245.
- .. Mrs. (grandmother), 22-24, 34-39.
- .. Miss Antoinette (Aunt Toney), 10, 17, 22-23, 26, 32, 39-40.
- .. Arthur Charles, in the City, 13; appearance of, 24; musical tastes of, 26; remains a bachelor, 26; toy theatre made by, 32; literary tastes of, 34; at his mother's death, 39-41; in Edinburgh, 225; surety at Lincoln's Inn, 245; acquaintance with Farrar, 386.
- .. Bransby, 89.
- .. Ellen, 34.
- .. Frederick, 13, 23, 25.
- .. George, appearance of, 24; visits Col. Burnand, 24; costume of, 36; trading instincts of, 126; living purchased by, 176.
- .. Louis, 22-24.
- .. Paul, 24.
- .. Theophilus, 19, 41, 96, 250, 252.
- .. M. Victor, 30.
- Burnand family, 23-25, 28.
- Burt, Mr., 6.
- Burton, Sir Richard, 426, 428.
- Bushey, 429, 432.
- Bussièrès, M. le Baron de, 209.
- Butler, Mr., 144 note.
- Byron, Henry J., introduction to, 239-240; editor of *Fun*, 261-263; remark on Farnie, 347; G. Rose, a friend of, 354; in Blanchard's benefit performance, 443; letter of,

- 443; *The Lady of Lyons* by,
444; otherwise mentioned,
314, 345.
- Cambridge—
A.D.C., 159-163, 175-177,
220, 224, 225, 317.
Downing College, 157-159.
Exeats, 164-167.
Magdalene College, 150, 154.
Theatre, 159, 160.
Trinity College, chapels at,
142; illness at, 143-144;
start at, 139-140; suppers
at, 150; theatricals at,
147-149; wines, etc., at,
159.
Upware Republic, 155-157.
Cambridge, Duke of, 123.
Cameron, Mr., 126.
" Henry, 254-255.
" Mrs. Henry, 126.
Cantabs, 156.
Canterbury Pilgrims, 414.
Carte, D'Oyly, 315.
Caste, 368 note.
Cavendish, The Hon. Frederick,
181.
Cayley, Digby ("Cracker"),
157-159.
Cecil, C., 366.
Cellier, Alfred, 315.
Chapman, Frederick, 229.
Charles the Second, 164.
Chart, Nye, 317.
Chastelan, 30.
Chatterton (harpist), 44.
" F. B., 236-237, 262.
Chevalier, Albert, 54.
Choate, Mr., 384.
Christmas, 26-28.
Christopher, The, 95.
Church-going, 3-5.
Chute, Mr., 168.
Cider Cellars, The, 91-95, 366.
Claremont, Teddy, 359-360, 364,
368-369.
"Clark, Little," 163, 172.
Clarke, John Sleeper, 350.
Clay, Frederick, 288, 368-369,
417, 440.
Clayton, John, 350.
Clerkenwell Sessions, 249-250.
Coal Hole, The, 91, 95, 137,
366.
Cock, The, 412-413.
Coghlan, Charles, 350, 360, 361,
362, 364, 366.
Coleman, "Charley," 420.
Colenso, Bishop, *Dundreary re-*
futing, 420-423.
Colenso, Case, 419-420.
" Dr., 419.
Colleen Bawn, 253, 295, 447.
Collette, Charles, 367 and note.
Collins, Jem, 164.
Colonel, The, 358-369.
Comic Histories, 401.
Comic Latin Grammar, The, 286.
Committee Rooms, work in,
253-255.
Compton, 163.
Concerts, 41-42, 47.
Conquest, George, 345.
Cookesley, A. (Gussy), 103 note,
105.
" Rev. Gifford, 84-85,
92, 98-102, 105-
112, 286.
Cooper, Bransby, 56-57, 114.
Corsican Brothers, 374.
Cosmopolitan, The, 413-414.
Costa, Sir Michael, 374.
Covent Garden, 41.
Cowen, Fred., 417.
Cowley, Mrs., 10, 49-51.
" Miss Clara (Mrs.
Bishop), 49-50, 52,
287.
" Abraham, 48.
" Emma, 3, 50.
" Hannah, 48.
" Miss Harriet, 48, 51.
Cowley Fathers, 188.
Cox and Box, 407.
Coyne, Sterling, 299, 346, 446.
Craigie, Edmund, 410.
Craven, 430.
Creswick and Shepherd, Messrs.,
291-292.
Crichton-Browne, Sir James,
179.
Crimean War, 90.
Crockford's, 138, 412.

- Croker, Dillon, 32 *note*, 438.
 Crystal Palace, 89-91.
 Cuddesdon, 181-183, 184-188, 193.
 Cumberlege, Arthur, 147-149, 161.
 ? Cumming, Mr., 35.
 Damer, Hippy, 122.
 Dance, 447.
 Dancing, 44-45; public, 137-138.
 Dantzie, Robert, 7-10.
 Danvers, Mr., 301.
 Davis, Mrs., 6.
 „ Mrs. (Nurse), 14, 17.
 „ Gent, M.P., 392, 394.
 Davison, Jimmy, 415-418, 439-440.
 Day, Mr. Justice, 396.
 de Lara, Isidore, 388-392.
Deal Boatman, The, 262.
 Deane, Johnnie, 260, 290-292, 293, 298.
Demoiselle du Téléphone, La, 376.
 Dewar, Fred., 246, 301.
 Dickens, Charles, 27, 40 *note*, 100, 135, 283-284.
 „ „ junior, 99-100.
Didò, 232-234, 236-240, 270.
 Dillon, Charles, 169.
 Dobson, 125.
 Dodgson, Miss Decima, 16-17, 19-21.
 Dodgson family, 13-16, 18.
 Donne, Capt., 220.
 „ Charles, 162, 219-220.
 „ William Bodham, 219, 225, 232, 237, 273, 378.
 Donovan, Dr., 204-206.
 Doyle, Dicky, 62, 371.
 Drake, Mrs., 170.
 Dramatic Authors' Society, 295, 299, 348, 446.
 Dramatic work, proceeds of, 313-316.
 "Dropping the Pilot" (cartoon), 404.
 Drury Lane Theatre, 241.
 Duff-Gordon, Sir Alexander, 229.
 Dülcken, Madame, 43, 440.
 Dulwich, *Punch* dinner at, 275.
 Du Maurier, 274, 307, 313-314, 358, 368, 438.
 Dunraven, Lord, 331-333.
 Durnford, Rev. Francis, 66-67, 82, 98.
 Early Closing Act (1872), 135.
 Edinburgh, theatrical effort at, 224-225.
 Edinburgh, Duke of, 441-442.
 Edward VII., King, 161, 365, 378.
 Edwards, Sutherland, 439-440.
 Eglinton, Lord, 127.
 Elliott, Rev. Venn, 58.
 Elssler, Fanny, 134.
 Emden, 242-243.
 Emery, Sam, 246.
 Escott, T., 403, 405.
 Esher, 226.
 Eton—
 Advantages of, 83, 119.
 Breakfast at, 73-74.
 Catholic house at, proposed, 353.
 Celebrities of, 87-88.
 Chapel at, 84-86, 123.
 Departure from, 115-117.
 Discomforts and bullying at, 69-73, 75-77.
 "Dumpkins" escapade, 106-112.
 Ethical standard and tone at, 78-80, 83-84, 117-118.
 Extras at, 84.
 Fagging at, 76-77, 118.
 First arrival at, 66-68.
 Friends at, 119.
 Governing body of, 84-85.
 Lessons at, 81.
 Nicknames at, 99.
 Recreations at, 77-78, 81-82.
 River trip from, 123.
 Theatre-going at, 100.
 Theatricals at, 102 *and note*.
 Evans, D'Arcy, 95.
 „ Pater," 228, 273, 275-276, 278, 284, 439.
 Evans's, 91-92, 95, 130, 135-136, 171, 366.
 Ewart, Salisbury, 68-69, 70, 77.
 Exmouth, Lord, 94.

- Faber, Father, 211-212, 353-354.
 Fagging, 76-77, 118.
Family Ties, 367.
 Farman, 288.
 Farnie, Mr., 345-350.
 Farrar, Archdeacon, 386-387.
 Farren, Nellie, 367.
 " William, 32 note, 350.
 Fashions of 1842, 12.
 Fechter, 296, 373, 374.
 Fenton, 345.
 Ferguson, Sir James, 405.
 Fernandez, J., 360, 362, 366.
 Fitzgerald, 345.
 " Gerald, 145, 147,
 162-163, 164.
 " John, 145.
 " Maurice Purcell, 145-
 147, 226-228, 230,
 444.
 Flexmon, 134.
 Flitter, Wyndham, 375.
 Foley Rooms, 138.
 Foreign travel, 186-187.
 Forster, Cyril, 203.
 Fotheringay, Miss, 128.
 Freemasonry, 177-179.
 Frere's, 138.
 Frost, Mr., 19.
Fun, 261-264, 270, 358.
 Furniss, Harry, 309, 388-392, 406.
 Furtado, Miss, 449.
 Gaiety Theatre, 367.
 Galanty Show, 12.
 Gallery of Illustration, Water-
 loo Place, 351, 370.
 Gardner, Mr., 114.
 Garrick Club, 283, 287-289,
 378, 414, 426.
 Garthorne, C. W., 365.
Gent, The, 93.
 Gibson, Miss M., 405.
 Giffard, Hardinge (Lord Hals-
 bury), 172, 252.
 Gilbert, Sir John, 264, 272, 274.
 " W. S., contributions of,
 to *Fun*, 262-264; re-
 munerated of, 314;
 on Rose's paper, 354;
 in Blanchard's benefit
 performance, 443.
 Glover, Miss, 365.
 " Mrs., 32 and note.
Glow-worm, The, 402.
 Goddard, Arabella, 417.
 Golightly, Rev. Mr., 186.
 Goodford, Dr., 115 and note,
 116-117.
 Graham, Miss C., 366.
 " Ly., 365.
 Grain, Dick, 410.
 Green, Paddy, 135-136, 163, 171-
 174.
 Gregory, Rev. Mr., 35-37, 53.
 Grey, Mr., 366.
 Grimthorp, Lord, 387.
 Grisi, 41.
 " Carlotta, 134.
 Grosvenor, " Dicky " (Lord Stal-
 bridge), 175, 178.
 Guedalla, Mr., 388, 392.
 Guest, Dr., 160-161.
 Gurney, Russell, 250-251.
Guy Fawkes Day, 102 note, 143-
 144 note.
 Hale Lodge, 343.
 Halliday, 314.
 Halsbury, Lord (Hardinge
 Giffard), 172, 252.
 Hanover Square Rooms, 43,
 47, 137.
 Hanson, Sir Reginald, 394.
 Harding, Thomas, 57-58.
 Hare, John, 310, 446.
Harlequin and the Three Bears,
 120-121.
 Harley, 163.
 Harris, Sir Augustus, 374-377,
 430, 433-434 and note.
 Harrison, Dr., 57.
 Harvey, Shepherd, 156.
 Hauzmann, M., 38-39.
 Hawtrey, Charles, 362 and note.
 " George, 362 note.
 " John, 362 note.
 " Dr. Stephen, 84, 85,
 115 and note, 362
 note.
 " W. F., 365.
 Haymarket Theatre, 31, 32 note,
 121, 315, 358, 437-438.
Headless Man, 355-356.

- Healy, Rev. James ("Father James"), 260, 386.
 Helmore, A., 365.
 ? Hemming, Mr., 35.
 Henderson, Alexander, 344-345, 346-350.
 Herbert, Miss, 246.
 " W., 366.
 Herkomer, Professor, 429-433.
 Hermann, 298.
 Hewett, Mr., 144 *note*.
 Hill, Right Rev. Rowley, 177.
 Hodge, C., 99, 103 *note*.
 Hodgson, Rev. Francis, 84.
 Holl, Mr., 249.
 Hollingshed, John, 367.
 Holmes, Miss Myra (Mrs. Pinero), 360, 362, 366.
 " Thomas Knox, 253-254, 255.
 Holroyd, 255, 256.
 Home, Mr., 324-333.
 Hood, Tom, 262-263, 358.
 Home, Beresford, 182.
 Houston, Miss, 366.
 Howard, Mr., 301.
 " Miss Louisa, 173.
 Hozier, Colonel, 428.
 Huddleston, Judge, 395.
 Hudson, 114.
 Hueffer, Dr., 417-418.
 Hughes, Miss (Mrs. Gaston Murray), 248.
 Hutchins family, 53-56.
 Ibbetson, Sir Charles, 94.
 Illness, at Bath, 55-56; at Eton, 114-115; at Cambridge, 143-145.
Illustrated London News, 370, 408.
In for a Holiday, 233.
 Ingram, Mr., 370.
Irish Diamonds, 438.
 Irving, Sir Henry, 426-428.
 Italian songs, 60-61.
Ixion, 287, 294, 302.
 James, David, 345.
 James and Thorne, Messrs., 315.
 Jarrett, Mrs., 414-415.
 Jefferson, Jo, 437-438.
 Jerrold, Douglas, 315.
 Jeune, Lady, 387-388, 391.
 " Sir Francis, 385, 391.
 Jöel, Herr von, 136-137.
 Joe's, 73-74.
 Joyce, Mr., Q.C., 248.
 Jubber, Mr., 172.
 Jullien, Mons., 44.
 Jung Bahadoor, 130.
 Kaffirs, The, 249.
 Kean, Charles, 238, 296, 374.
 Keeley, Mrs., 223-224, 242, 415-416.
 " Louise (Mrs. Montagu Williams), 222-224, 241.
 " Mary (Mrs. Albert Smith), 241.
 " Robert, Montagu Williams a favourite with, 224; desires legal career for M. Williams, 248; in extravaganza, 415.
 Keene, Charles, 229, 274, 276, 277, 281-283, 287, 307, 417, 439.
 Kelly, Reginald, 163-164, 166.
 Kenney, Charles Lamb, 415-416, 440.
 Kenny, 239.
 Kingdon, Mr., 177.
 Kingston, Mr., 144 *note*.
 Knight's oyster shop, 303.
Knights of the Round Table, The, 350.
 Knowles, 315.
 Koenig, Herr von, 44.
 Lablache, 41.
 " Frederick, 134.
 Lacy, Thomas Hailes, 233-236.
 " Walter, 374.
La Dame de St. Tropez, 245-246.
Lady of Lyons, The, 444.
 Lambert, W. H., 365.
 Lara, Isidore de, 388-392.
 Lawson, Sir Edward, 308-310, 312.

- Leech, John, 136, 276, 278, 281, 284, 285, 307, 371-372.
 Leigh, Percival (The Professor), 62, 276-279, 284-287, 307, 342, 371, 417.
 Leighton, 282.
 Lemon, Mark, at Evans's, 135-136; *Dido* submitted to, 238, 270; interview with, 271-273; president at *Punch* dinners, 276, 278; contrasted with S. Brooks, 282, 286; intimacy with, 305; as Falstaff, 351; *Punch* work of, 370-372; theatre passes of, 372; otherwise mentioned, 229-230, 283-284, 342, 404.
 Leo xiii., Pope, 435.
 Levy, Jonas, 246-247.
 Lewis, Mr., 248.
 „ Sir George, 311, 348, 387-388, 391-392.
 Lichfield's, 145.
 Liddon, Rev. Henry Parry, 183-186, 212.
 Lightfoot, Dr., 181.
 Limmer's, 139, 163 and note.
 Lincoln's Inn, 176, 232.
 Lind, Jenny, 41.
 Lindley, Miss H., 366.
 Liston, 419.
 Liszt, L'Abbé, 46-47.
Little Don Giovanni, 446.
 Llewellyn, 147.
 Lockwood, Frank, 308-309, 312, 395.
 Lom, Baron de, 28-29.
 Longhurst, Mr., 19.
Lord Dundreary, 437-438.
Lord Lovel and Lady Nancy, 233.
 Louisy, Count, 28-29.
 Lowell, Mr., 384.
 Lucas, Sam, 279.
 Lucy, W. H., 406.
 Ludlow, Mr., 53.
 Lyceum Theatre, 32 note, 169, 232, 302, 373.
 Lytton, Bulwer, 315.
 „ Miss, 405.
 M'Lean, Mr., 263, 265-266.
 Macready, 296.
 Maddox, 315.
 Magee, Dr., 385.
 Malet, Sir Edward, 99, 103 note.
 „ Henry, 99, 101-102.
Man in the Moon, The, 44, 65, 93, 171.
 Manning, Archbishop, hospitality of, 195-196, 213-218; consultation with, 196; acquaintance with Fred. Wilson, 200; first meeting with, 200-202; characteristics of, 202-203; humour of, 210; preaching of, 212; views on vocation, 214-217; views for G. Rose, 352-353; letter from, 435-436.
Mari à la Campagne, Un, 358.
 Mario, 41.
 Marius, Mons., 345, 367.
 Marks, 282.
 Marshall, Mrs., 334-337.
 „ Frank, 377-382, 402, 403, 405.
 „ Sir James, 203, 214.
 Mathews, Charles, in *The Queensberry Fête*, 31, 32 note; at the Lyceum, 232; 302-303; otherwise mentioned, 354-356.
 „ Charles Willie, 308-309.
 Matthews, Frank, 303.
 Mayhew, Horace. ("Pony"), 136, 276, 278, 280-281, 283, 306.
 Meadowbank, 287.
Medea, 232.
 Mellon, Mrs. A. (Miss Woolgar), 448.
 Meredith, George, 146-147, 227-229, 443-444.
 Miéville family, 30.
 Millais, Jack, 272, 274, 282.
 Milliken, E. J., 392, 394.
Miss Helyett, 17.
 Mitchell, 83.
Mokeanna, 273-274.
 Molloy, James, 405.
 Montgomery, 59.

- Moore, John Voce, 141, 148, 151-153.
 „ Tim, 256-260.
 Morgan, Matt, 263-264, 282, 402-403.
 Morton, John Maddison, 102 note, 346.
 Mowbray, Thomas, 296-298.
 Mrs. Brown, 351-352, 354, 358.
 Mrs. Brown at the Play, 379.
 Mrs. Brown's Budget, 354.
 Mummers, 13.
 Murray, Miss (Mrs. Brandram), 238.
 „ Leigh, 248.
 „ „ Mrs., 361, 362, 366.
 Musgrave, Frank, 345.
 Music, 43.
 Musical Times, 416.
 Musical World, The, 416, 439.
 Muzzle, Mr., 49.
 Myddleton, Miss, 353.
 Namby, Mrs., 32.
 Neuchâtel, 29-30.
 Newcombe, Mr., 168-169.
 Newman, Cardinal, 353; *Doctrine of Development*, 189-192.
 Nice Firm, A, 355.
 Nicholls, Miss, 10.
 Nicholson, Judge, 137.
 Nilsson Christine, 440.
 Noaks (or Nokes), Mr., 279-280.
 Noble, Mr., 20-21, 36.
 Norman, Henry John, 140-141, 147-148.
 Northcote, Rev. Stafford, 127.
 Oblates, House of the, 195-196, 201-218.
 O'Hara, Robert, 260.
 Old Bailey, 350-351.
 Oldfield, Mr., 103.
 "Old Ship, The," 317.
 Oliver, Miss Patty, 294, 296-298, 301-302, 304.
 Olympic Theatre, 352, 413, 448.
 Once a Week, 229, 276, 279.
 O'Neil, Canon, 211.
 Opera, 41.
 Opera Comique, 315.
 Oratory, The, 424.
 "Ottoman" Club, 288.
 Our American Cousin, 419.
 Our Boys, 315.
 Our Club, 367.
 Oxenford, John, 314, 378-379, 382.
 "Pagani's," 411.
 Palace of Truth, The, 315.
 Palk, Wilmot, 99, 103 note, 105, 107, 110-111.
 Parry, John, 47, 144 note, 411.
 „ Serjeant, 252.
 Patey, Mr., 58.
 Patience, 369.
 Paulton, Harry, 449.
 Pauncefote, Lord, 385.
 Paxton, Sir Joseph, 279.
 Payn, James, 127.
 Paynter, Jack, 123-125.
 Peach, Keighly, 99, 105.
 Pearl, Cora, 131.
 Pearson, 124.
 Pellegrini, Carlo, 411.
 Perrot, 134.
 Personal Reminiscences of the A.D.C., 160 and note, 162, 176.
 Phelps (actor), 296.
 „ Mr., 384-385.
 Phenomenon in a Smockfrock, A, 170.
 Phillips, 314.
 "Phiz" (Hablot K. Brown), 48, 272, 274.
 Piatti, 45.
 Pickwick, 40 note, 49.
 Pinafore, 315.
 Pinero, Mr., 311.
 Pirithous, 445-446.
 Planché, J. R., 31, 232, 239, 247, 346, 446.
 Plumtre, 84.
 Poland, Sir Harry, 248.
 Polka, 44-45.
 Pope, Sam, 255.
 Pott, Rev. S., 183, 186, 194, 197.
 Potleton Legacy, 375.
 Practical Man, The, 355.
 Prehistoric Peeps, 406.
 Price, Capt. Morton, 163, 168-170.

- Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool, 344, 347.
 Prince of Wales's Theatre, 359, 365, 446.
 Prinsep, 282.
 Pritt and Grubb, 254.
 Prowse, Jeff, 262-264, 267.
Punch—
 à Beckett, G. and A., join the staff, 404.
 Bennett benefit, 407.
 Dinners, reminiscences of, 275-283.
 Doyle leaves staff of, 62.
 Early work for, 287.
 Evans's frequented by staff of, 135.
 Libel cases, 388-395.
 Lucy, W. L. ("Toby"), 406.
 Past and present working contrasted, 284.
 Supply of, at school, 65.
Punch's Almanack, 372.
Punch's Pocket-Book, 371-372.
 Puseyism, 62, 99, 161, 185.

 Ranoë, Miss Rosina, 301.
 Rathmore, Lord, 260.
 Ratisbonne, Le père, 208-209.
 Raynham, Miss, 345.
 Reach, Angus B., 64.
 Reade, Charles, 445.
 Reading parties, 175.
Red Rover, The, 443.
 Reece, 314.
 Reed, E. T., 406.
 Reeve, Jack, 303.
 " Percy, 388-391.
 Rehearsals, 242-244.
 Religion, ridiculing of, 61-63.
 Reynolds, Miss, 173.
Reynolds' Miscellany, 264.
 Ribton, Mr., 248, 250.
 Richards, Rev. Upton, 182.
 " Very Rev. Walter, 203, 206, 209, 213.
 Richmond, 255, 287.
Rip Van Winkle, 438.
 Rivaz, Mrs. Henry, 30.
 Roberts, Rev. Mr., 181.
 Roberts (artist), 31 and note.
 " Lady, 58.
 Roberts, Rev. Mr., 57-58.
 Robertson, Rev. Mr., 212.
 " Tom, 262, 315, 359.
 " Wybrow, 402, 405-406.
 Robins, Joseph, 220-222, 233.
 Robson, 232-234, 236, 242-244, 262.
 Roebuck, Capt. Disney, 163, 223.
 Rogers, Mr., 172.
Romance under Difficulties, 233.
 Roose, Dr. Robson, 424.
 Rose, George, 262-263, 351-358, 379, 380-383.
 Rosebery, Lord, 310.
 Roselle, Miss Amy, 360, 362, 366.
 Ross (comic singer), 92, 95.
 Rotten Row, 90.
 Rougemont, Henry, 53.
 Rouse, James, 53, 89, 303.
 Rowley, Mr., 366.
 " Rev. Julius, 175, 178.
 Roxby, Robert, 303.
 Royalty Theatre, 287, 297, 376, 445.
 Russell, Sir Charles (Lord Russell of Killowen), 308, 309, 311-312, 397.
 " Frank, 310.
 " W. H., 426, 428.
 Rustem Pacha, 424-426.

 Sadler's Wells, 241.
 St. George, Julia, 303.
 St. James' Club, 288, 412.
 " Theatre, 236, 239, 245, 449.
 St. John, Florence, 345.
 Sala, G. A., 306, 407-410, 414-415, 426, 428, 442, 445.
 Sam (butler), 23, 25.
 "Sam Hall," 92, 94-95.
 Sambourne, Linley, 307, 309, 310, 351, 371.
 Santley, Miss Kate, 449.
 Sapte, Miss Louisa, 126.
 Sapte family, 24, 28.
Saturday Night, 262-263.
 Savoy Theatre, 314-315, 369.
 Sayers, Tom, 242.

- Schatzeler, Mr., 30, 35.
 Schneider, Madame, 449.
 Schools,—Preparatory, 13-21;
 Bath, 53-56; Brighton, 57-
 60, 63; Paul's Cray, 63-65;
 Eton, *see* Eton.
 Schumann, Madame, 45-46.
 Scott, Clement, 263, 354, 405.
 „ Hope, 254-255.
 Selby, Mrs., 137, 287, 294, 302,
 446.
Serious Family, The, 358.
 Serle, Monsignor, 212.
 Seymer, Ernest Clay Ker, 440.
 Sharp, Miss, 15.
 Sharpe (singer), 91, 130.
 Shee, Sir Martin, 60-61.
 Shepherd, 291-294.
 Sheridan, 352.
 Siddons, Miss M., 366.
Siege of Seringapatam, The, 402.
 Silver, Henry, 276, 278, 279.
 „ Sim, 162.
 Simpson, Palgrave, 299.
 Skelt, 9-11.
 „ Skelt's Scenes and Characters,”
 443.
 „ Sketchley, Arthur.” *See* Rose,
 George.
 „ R. F., 357.
 Skirrow, Mr. and Mrs., 414-
 415.
Slasher and Crasher, 102 *note*.
 Sleigh, Serjeant, 248.
 Smart, Captain Hawley, 288.
 Smily, Mr., 365.
 Smith, Mr. Justice A. L., 245.
 „ Albert, *Man in the Moon*,
 44, 171; *The Advan-*
 tures of Mr. Ledbury,
 93, 129, 171; at Evans's,
 136; *The Gents*, 93;
 Gents, 157; *Pottleton*
 Legacy, 171; amateur
 pantomime, 221, 253;
 Mont Blanc, 241; other-
 wise mentioned, 415.
 „ H., 103 *note*.
 „ Hamblyn (Big Smith),
 175.
 „ Sydney, 211.
 Smoking, 41-42, 101-102.
- Smuggins, 79-80.
Sorcerer, 315.
 Sothern, 315, 318-319, 354, 356-
 357, 419-420, 437-438.
 Soulsby, Sir William, 141.
 Souter (comedian), 303.
 Spankie le Marchant, 87-88, 104,
 265.
 Sparkes, 124-125.
 Spiritualistic experiences, 325-
 342.
 Stanfield, 31 *and note*.
 Stanley, Sir Henry, 426-428.
 Stewart, Michael Shaw, 120-
 121.
 Stone, 282.
 Stonor, Monsignor, 435-436.
 Storey, „ Dolly,” 282.
 Stracey, Captain, 414.
 Straight, Sir Douglas, 405.
 Strand Theatre, 345-346, 367,
 443-444.
 Strickland, Mr., 32 *note*.
 Sullivan, Mrs., 441-442.
 „ Sir Arthur, on horse-
 back, 311; *Patience*,
 368-369; letter from,
 441; with Duke of
 Edinburgh, 441-442;
 initials of, 442; other-
 wise mentioned, 288,
 315, 417-418, 440.
 „ Fred, 442.
 Sunday, 3-5.
 Surrey Theatre, 291.
 Sutton, Robert, 83.
 Swanage, 6.
 Swanborough family, 345.
 Swinburne, Algernon, 104-105.
 Symondson, Mr., 144.
 Symposium, *The*, 412.
- Tackle, Miss, 26, 33.
 Taglioni Marie, 134.
 Talfourd, Frank, 170, 239, 314,
 447.
 Taylor, Miss Ada, 301.
 „ Sir Charles, 136, 288.
 „ Tom, 276, 278, 280,
 307, 314, 346, 355,
 357, 371, 404, 413-
 414, 415, 437, 446.

- Tegetmeyer, 247.
 Telbin, 430.
Telephone Girl, The, 376-377.
 Tenniel, Sir John, 276, 279, 281, 302, 307-309, 351, 371, 403, 404, 439.
 Terry, Mr., 246.
 " Edward, 345-346.
 Thacker, Rev. Mr., 139-141.
 Thackeray, W. M., denounces Puseyism, 62; at the Cider Cellars, 94; at Evans's, 135-136; praises *Moheanna*, 273; introduction to, 276; at *Punch* dinners, 277, 278, 280; affair with Edmund Yates, 283-284; intimacy with, 307; otherwise mentioned, 409, 416.
 Thalberg, 44.
 Theatres (*see also separate titles*)—
 Pits of, 32 *note*.
 Prices at, 32 *note*.
 Toy, 9-11, 32-33.
 Theatrical leanings, 3, 9-11, 33, 52, 144 *note*;
 travelling company, 163-170.
 " managers, 297-299, 372-377.
 Theobalds, story of the haunted room at, 319-324; séance at, 325-327.
 Thistlethwayte, Mrs. (Laura Bell), 130-131.
 Thomas, Miss Kate, 144.
 Thompson, Rev. Mr., 127.
 " Lydia, 120-122 and *note*.
 Thorne, Tom, 345.
 Tierney, Mr., 211.
 Tilbury, Miss, 122 *note*.
 " Mr., 32 *note*.
Times, The, 378, 404, 415, 439.
Tomahawk, The, 403, 404.
Tom Hood's Annual, 261.
 Toole, J. L., 319, 420, 426, 448.
 Toole's Theatre, 346.
 Toulmin, Mrs. Augustus, 32.
 Toulmin family, 30.
Trilby, 313-314.
 Trollope, Anthony, 413.
 Tuppen, Tom, 152.
 Twiss, Quintin, 220.
 " Two Pins Club " (T.P.C.), 307-312.
Valse à deux temps, 44-45.
 Vaudeville Theatre, 346.
 Vaughan, Archbishop, 210, 211 *note*.
 Vernon, Hon. William Venables, 83.
 Vestris, Madame (Mrs. Charles Mathews), 31-32 and *note*, 232, 302-303.
 Victoria, Queen, 122, 253, 365, 403.
Villikins and his Dinah, 161-162, 164, 169, 233.
 Vivian, Glyn, 141, 147.
 Voules, Miss, 127.
 Walford, Edward, 279.
 Wall, Mr., 144.
 Wallack, Lester, 368.
 Waller, 278.
 Wamby, Jakes, 58.
 Ward, Rev. Arthur, 177-179.
 Warlhouse, Miss, 366.
 Warner, Mrs., 342.
Waterman, The, 164.
 Waters, Corporal, 8-9.
 Webber's, 73-74.
 Webster, Benjamin, 32 *note*, 370, 447-448.
Wedding Breakfast, The, 32 *note*.
 Weldon, Harry, 288.
 " Wellington, The," 412.
 Weston, J. P., 144.
 Whately, Dr., 386.
 Whewell, Dr., 180.
 Wigan, Alfred, 245-246, 374.
 Wigney, Clement, 48-49.
 Wilberforce, Bishop, 185, 193-194.
 Willert, Mr., 236-237.
 Williams, Montagu, 103-104, 222-224, 241-242, 245, 248, 293-294, 415.
 Willis, N. P., 414.
 Willoughby, Agnes (Mrs. Windham), 131.
 Wilson, Frederick Collins, visits Tom Wirlston, 132-133; dra-

- matic talents of, 161-162;
 hospitality of, 198-200, 219,
 238, 267; as friendly critic,
 267-269; interest of, in the
 supernatural, 319 *seq.*
 Wilson, Rivers, 356-357.
 Wilton, Miss Blanche, 367 *and*
note.
 „ Miss Marie (Lady Ban-
 croft), 170, 297, 367
and note, 368, 445-
 446.
 Windham (of Norfolk), 131-133.
Windsor Castle, 345.
 Wiseman, Cardinal, 212-213.
 Wood, Sir Evelyn, 414.
 Woodgate, Hamilton, 60, 64,
 113-114.
 „ Miss, 89.
- Woolgar, Miss (Mrs. A. Mellon),
 448.
World, The, 405, 407.
 Wrackham, Peter, 279.
 Wright, Edward, 221-222.
 Wyndham, Miss, 236, 238, 270.
 „ Sir Charles, 301-302,
 356, 395-397.
 „ Robert, 220.
 Yachting adventures, 175.
 Yates, Edmund, 238, 283-284,
 388, 405, 407, 414, 426, 428.
 Yonge, Mr., 103.
 Young (butler), 327-328.
 „ Rev. Mr., 59-60.
 „ Charles, 236.
Young Gentlemen, 156.
Young Ladies, 157.

